Knight, Death and the Devil - The Heroic Idea

by Hans F.K. Gunther

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Forward

This book is meant to proclaim the hero, and in doing so, it must prove itself to be at odds with its own age: it is meant to speak of the Knight, of Death and the Devil, in an age of the masses, in an age that scarcely seems worthy of death, and in an age that is all too willing to interpret and forgive the baseness within humanity itself as a matter of "historical development"—and must therefore even deprive the Devil himself of his righteous fury.

What is such a book to do in such a time?
It must speak of things from which the age has wrested their purpose: it must speak of the hero, in an age that has long since chosen the more comfortable path; it must speak of the hero's fate, in an age that knows only inevitable developments; it must speak of his passion, in an the age that is driven by desires; it must speak of his love, in an the age that thinks first of the sexual and then looks askance at its filth, or perhaps points to social insurance, that is, to public institutions, to a procedure for coping with need.
The book must speak of the hero's hatred, in an age where hatred is scolded: it does not bear hatred well, and as always, where something is rotten, a foreign word creeps in in defense: humanity! And so at every turn.
The words of the language may be the same, but the will behind the word is of a different spirit, one of the age then, and yet another here in the book, for what is perceived as the embodiment of a life and a living creation demands its own reality, along with a presence that believes in its value.

Such is this book, and hence its confidence, despite everything, precisely in this time - let it be so!

- August, 1920

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Part One

The Strength of the Hero

This book is meant to tell of the hero - we must therefore strive to grasp his essence.

There must be a power within him that is entirely foreign to our age, since otherwise there would not be so much blasphemy against the heroic in our time and among all who truly belong to the spirit of the age. From whence does this power flow to the hero? Let it be said at once: the hero always stands at the dawn of the world—whether he is aware of it or not.
His opposite is the descendant; that is why all latecomers and followers hate the heroic, and that is why the masses hated the hero Bismarck, and do not know what to make of Beethoven.
But enough of that: let us speak here of the hero, who stands at the beginning - everything else follows from this.

For a long time, the hero remains in his youth; here he takes his time and drifts along, lazy and withdrawn.
There is a heroic idleness, and perhaps only the hero has the right to be idle for months on end - for the hero, idleness simply means being unable to join in the work of others because it is not his own work. Within him this idleness gathers into a true deed, as the Icelandic saga of Grettir the Strong recounts the hero's idleness with relish; the sagas also repeatedly recount the hero's childhood: how he spends his years as a "coal-biter"[1]—the Norse man has never been precocious—and how he lies by the hearth and rolls at the men's feet when they enter the hall.
Heroic laziness is resting in oneself: good-natured, taciturn, and indifferent to the goings-on in the house—such are the coal-biters who later go berserk, that primal human outburst of strength and fighting spirit - just let them find themselves first, and then the coal-biter is no more!

The sagas tell of how the hero finds himself in the prime of youth: hatred and clan vengeance, fervor for deeds, the lust for a stormy voyage across the North Sea, the urge for distant lands, the longing for a destiny—these awaken the hero!
The hero seizes his life as a gamble, his own gamble, his task - with that, all is said, and with that, he has awakened the lion of his destiny—for only the hero has a destiny.
He seeks a life of affirmation, a destiny that shall faithfully reveal itself to him and remain ever the same; he wants to be the noble one who ventures into the forest of the Lindworm, the true-born one who seeks the twelve deeds of the hero; he is not concerned with the reward or the cheers of the streets, but only with himself, that he may remain true.

"I am undaunted; I have dared it and will await the end."

- Ulrich von Hütten

[1] A stock personality in Icelandic sagas, usually to refer to a young man who transforms from an idle individual to a heroic man. - The Translator

Thus his confidence lives on despite Death and the Devil - thus he steps out into his morning.

The hero has always been a beginning; what do we, who come later, know of the freshness of such an existence; who is fresher than Siegfried and simpler than he?
The hero is simple because he always stands at the beginning: unentangled in inherited traditions and unbound by the well-thought-out, the often-experienced, not to be ensnared by the web of connections—so truly free!
The hero always stands at the beginning of a world, for that is the primal force within him. He cannot conceive of himself as anything other than an individual: indifferent to what drives others, turned away from what others pursue, and disdainful of the day's gains and acquisitions, this makes him hated by the crowd - in the hostility of the crowd, the hero experiences his loneliness as a youth, until, as a man, the hero's loneliness has become his strength and pride.

The hero learns that to face one's destiny means to arm oneself, that it means to renounce happiness, to forgo much, and to give the tender soul—which cries out for happiness like the hungry for bread—a hard stone.
Grettir learns of this when he says:

"Happiness and manhood do not go hand in hand."

Every living being longs for happiness, the hero most of all, for he is simple and loves life - yet he has a fate, and an unrelenting one; he knows that his path is not the one that leads to happiness with other people.
This is how Gotthold Lessing experienced it when his son died and Lessing's wife followed:

"I too wanted to have it as good as other people, but it did me no favors."

He persevered, true to his fate like his king Frederick the Great, who declared that one must beat one's soul with a stick.
It is of no use: to will a fate is to become as great as one's fate—relentlessly great.

"I will seize fate by the throat."

That is what Beethoven said - and so he lived.

Through his solitude, the hero experiences the idea of fate, and that is why he has often been the silent one, knowing himself to be without equal, most akin to the sea, the mountains, and the oak tree: that is why the hero loves the sea and sailing in the Viking dragon ship; that is why he climbs up into the mountains.
Up there he feels eternal, befriended by the gods of the beginning, and senses what alone fills him: timeless power!
The hero and the universe - that is the deepest glimpse into the unfolding events - thus does the lonely man experience it:

"If I stood before you, Nature, a man alone, then it would be worth the trouble to be human."

- Goethe, "Faust"

Thus, from power and desire, pleasure and pain, the hero's insatiable love for mountain and forest, for river and sea, arises.

And this too: because he is the solitary one standing at the beginning, joy and cheerfulness must also become primal to him.
Heroic cheerfulness seeks undaunted to take the world as a giant plaything; heroic joy is the certainty of being indestructible, the rumbling exuberance of the armored warrior, a laugh of health, the reckless daring of a wild Hans — this leaping into the fray of his whole being, to set a robust wit on its feet and break a path for it, this feast of all feasts, which the community of the indestructible celebrates with honor at long tables!
One must experience heroic cheerfulness in the song of Thrym, which the Edda has handed down to us; one must experience it in the manifold imagery of the Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals; one must experience it in its primal vigor in Luther, who was always glad to be cheerful, and had a path of discipline laid out for his students of theology!
How he, standing mightily at the dawn of a new era, tosses about the old powers of the world as if they were coarse toys:

"My grace and greetings first, Most Holy See! Do not crack or break before this new greeting, in which I place my name at the top and forget the kissing of the feet - you shall hear the reason."

One must experience heroic cheerfulness again in Bach, when he celebrates his Easter with drums and trumpets that resound, as it were, from the springtime of a world; one must experience it again in Beethoven, whose joyful melodies often sound with a gnarled power like the music played at a folk festival of a heroic tribe.
The primal, rugged humanity, the indestructibility of the message, bursts forth again and again in Beethoven's work: that is heroic joy.
A heroic thinker of antiquity, Heraclitus, experienced the world as a game of Zeus - to the solitary one in his joyful hour, the world will appear thus; Zeus is the hero who experiences his joyful day.

In painful and pleasurable solitude, in the recognition of a mighty fate, the hero stands at the dawn of his world: he has dared to live a destiny, to fear death not, and to be hated by many.
He knows his worth, stretches out his arms, and strides forth - that everything remains to be done, that a beginning shines all around and affirmation everywhere—that is the heroic confidence, the confidence known only to the pure, the noble-born: Siegfried!

Who is simpler than Siegfried, and whom does the present understand less; does anyone among us living today still know the freshness of existence that belongs to the hero?
The fault is ours, for we have given away all the freshness of the world in the 19th century: we have traded the folk song for the operetta hit; we have traded the proverb for the newspaper catchphrase, and for the brash Berlin-style turn of phrase; we have left the fairy tale to the cattle—and barely even to

them—or we have misused it as symbolist nonsense; we have forgotten the dialect, or never even learned it—is it any wonder that we stand bare?
This wretched 19th century has managed to drive the Aryan spirit of life out of the West, and everything has withered or been flattened under its influence: science and art, morality, worldview, and public life. The 19th century bred the uprooted and derailed human being, the human being without a vernacular, the city dweller; it has turned peoples into masses, and then created for this chaff unheroic and hero-hostile doctrines that will produce ever more chaff.
We have all been taught that we are chained into a long process of development, and that this chain of development leads from progress to progress - in this belief—for one must speak of the belief in development, not merely the idea of development—in this belief, a repulsive arrogance has taken hold of the age.
On the one hand: we have come a glorious way! — the arrogance of the know-it-all and the busybody — and on the other hand, a burdensome resignation, a dull certainty of being conditioned in everything - physically conditioned by development, and mentally conditioned by history.

The natural and human sciences of the 19th century have gone to great lengths to steer the stream of knowledge, which flowed deep and powerful in the times of Kant or Alexander von Humboldt, right into the shallows; the profound, thoughtful deliberation with which Goethe and Alexander von Humboldt observed natural phenomena—a heroic contemplation of nature could have emanated from them—how has all this been reduced to ruin by the shallow rationality of Darwin's descendants!
Darwinism, liberalism, and the scientific, political, and artistic thought of the 19th century—all are manifold facets of an unheroic, uncreative attitude toward life, sincerely meant attempts at interpretation by a short-sighted and sterile generation - if only everything that this century's intellectual busyness and its industrious division of labor had brought about had not appeared so exemplary!
When one considers them, all those so thoroughly committed to the spirit of the age, all those who are satisfied with the achievements of the modern mind—be they artists, legislators, thinkers, or researchers— they all belong to a hopeless breed of people, the intellectual middle class, which is never quite right and never quite wrong, and whose truths are so shallow and whose errors so pitiful that an opponent of this spirit, as far as he is a creative person, must repeatedly stifle a suffocating aversion even in the act of fighting it.
The time has come today to grasp this 19th century as a whole, and thereby to realize that it is our duty to ruthlessly overcome it within ourselves: it was the most wretched of all ages; it has decayed where others have built, and it has been effeminate, feebly blurring boundaries where others have created them with masculinity and creativity—in morality, in art, everywhere. We will recognize this again and again in the future.
In this, it stands furthest from a heroic worldview: it has robbed humanity of the ability to see itself in its beginnings.

First in the natural sciences: researchers in this field have mastered the urge to adapt their necessarily materialistic research methods—which brought them genuine successes—into a way of thinking, not just for themselves—for had they remained silent, they would still be held in high esteem— but they have fashioned worldviews out of their scientific findings, and as the hallmark sons of this age, they have taken their worldviews to the marketplace and spoken to the masses—not merely spoken, but have preached

sermons and touted various forms of substitute religion - in the end, one heard from them monistic Sunday devotions.
Where have we ended up; what has brought us from the heights of serious reflection, which Kant's age recognized as its duty, into the realm of brief thoughts and naturalistic moral teachings? Had the materialistic mindset of the 19th century remained honest, it would have let matter be matter, left humanity as mere matter—but it made the futile attempt to turn the poor mammal, chained by evolution, into a decent, liberal-enlightened citizen of the world, it has concocted a moral doctrine out of nothing and touted it as the standard - now behold its arrogance toward the beliefs of the commoners, toward traditional customs, toward the peasant and the royal loyalist, for it is, after all, the enlightened city dweller who knows that all people are equal, that a development leads from the primeval beast to man, and that, at its core, all that happens is matter in motion.
Here, the contemporary spiritual science and philosophy of the 19th century intervenes and takes the reflection further - while in the natural sciences, it was naturalism that made a heroic mindset impossible, here in the humanities it was what was called historicism.
Was there, at the end of the 19th century, a single one among the "famous" thinkers who would have courageously stepped back to the beginning? The philosophers hailed as exemplary were university professors who had become lost in the history of philosophy, and in the end, while one distinguished so many "types of worldviews" and knew the history of a problem down to the last detail, the question itself had slipped from one's grasp - was it not unheard-of for the leading professors of the age when a thinker set aside existing thought and boldly placed himself at the beginning; is the intellectual foundation of, say, a heroic worldview possible without this boldness?

The hero always stands at the beginning of the world; the age, however, had surrendered to historicism, and had thus ended up doubting the very recognition of a single, valid truth: that there is only a relative truth, and that every age believes it possesses the single truth, yet possesses only its own truth.
In the many academic chairs, there was no more exalted task than to provide, with "the finest sensitivity," an "analysis of humanity" of this or that era, and to construct this or that worldview "with the most assured sense of taste" according to the circumstances of the time and biographical data - but where was the passionate will, the deep sense of scientific responsibility, the restless, creative work of thought, the urge to move forward of one's own accord, and the ability to struggle until everything one had thought through had stood before the eye of truth, before the eye of the one, valid truth that is timeless?
If only we could regain the strength and passion of thought that the 19th century has eroded—everything would be won! The naturalistic view would be harmless, a pastime for the backward-minded; historicism, the reduction of spiritual life to history, would be recognized as powerless.
A heroic worldview would then become possible, one that could arise for a new generation, halting the disintegration of all things! In its place, as an organizing thought, would stand the theory of change, articulating the great context of the one, mighty World-Day[2], whereby it would also be aiding the researcher, no longer a tool of the short-sighted and no longer a foundation for a so-called scientific worldview - in this way, thought would be freed from the chaos and the burden of the "history of problems"; reflection would stand once more in the freshness of boldness, and the most living doctrine would be ours.

[2] The "World-Day", or "Weltentage", is a concept found in Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy that signifies a cosmic epoch or pivotal development in humanity. - The Translator

"He who has thought the deepest loves the most living."

- Hölderlin

Siegfried always steps into the dawn of a world - the present age, however, with its oppressive consciousness, stands at the very end of development, and the vast mass of knowledge of our time, which modern man can no longer transform into his own fruitfulness, has produced nothing but the conceit of knowledge and lifelessness.
Siegfried, who lives his heroism almost unconsciously, is the antithesis of our time; consciousness has made every fruit worm-eaten.

I know a metropolitan man of letters who, immediately after writing a poem, knew that a "new period" had begun for him; he knew this because he had divided his little life into periods in the manner of biographies and literary histories, since, after all, he knew that the lives of significant people are divided in this way - and so it has truly come to pass, especially in this corrupted Germany, that insipid womanizers compare themselves to Goethe, that everyday adulterers call themselves more enlightened, and half-baked philosophy students, because they have read about it, can eloquently expound on how they experience the "principium individuationis" "with the deepest pain" within themselves, or that people who diligently write sheet music assure one that their situation is like that of the young Beethoven.
One no longer lives of one's own accord; one no longer feels according to one's own feelings; one never stands at the beginning of one's own creation, but always in the reflection of life as it has happened; one knows of the hardships this or that great figure has endured, and adorns the shallow events of one's own busyness with words drawn from another's great existence; one constantly confuses the states of one's overstimulated nerves with "ideological conflicts" (Nietzsche, too, cannot be absolved of this); one classifies oneself, having read about it, as either Apollonian or Dionysian, speaks of refined passions where there are only depraved desires, and makes a great fuss about struggling between God and beast when one yet cannot find the strength for self-creation - so on and so forth.
In short: this age has labeled all its wretchedness with words that its so-called education has gradually amassed from the contemplation of great destinies, and where the nakedness of the times can only be clothed with a borrowed word, there the satisfaction of the zeitgeist is at its fullest - thus one can classify the pitiful phenomena of the day, speaking of extensive artists in contrast to intensive ones, of rationalist and panlogist worldviews, of this or that type of mind, and thereby continually betrays that our time knows no worldview of its own, and is certain of no mind of its own making.
One knows only the manifold "attitudes" that have been possible, and are supposedly the only ones that will ever be possible; one wanders through the centuries to find the meaning of our present culture, for the broad flood of this consciousness of time has inundated everything, and amid all these attitudes, there is no room for a stance of one's own.
Later, in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we will see again what we have observed here in the study of time: that everything is a taking of a stance toward existing things, while the spirit of attack is missing - one stands at all ends and knows nothing more of the courage to declare oneself, which lies at all beginnings.

The Hero and History

The hero stands at the beginning - does that mean he must lack a sense of history? That is not necessarily the case.

History itself should bear witness to the nature of the hero: the hero as an innovator, as a revolutionary who merely wants to overturn everything—such a hero has never existed.
As for the insolent and the loudmouths whom the spirit of the age hails as its "heroes" and extols in its newspapers—they are caricatures of the heroic, upon whom the masses linger; they have run rampant in our time, and there will be no salvation and no new beginning until a future age has ruthlessly overcome them.
Where there is upheaval, there one sees the insolent bustling about - therefore, it is unnecessary to cite examples for today's Germans, for the insolence of an uprooted age pours forth broadly and powerfully; this upheaval applies in art as well as in the state.

It was said by a man who suffered heroically—for he cared for every single soul—: I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill - thus has the hero strode through history in all ages.
One of the greats of our people, Beethoven, bears witness to this, for what would the insolent ones bred by the 19th century have done in his place with the sonata form that Beethoven found? They would have sought a contemptuous catchphrase for the traditional form, a jarring foreign term for their "music freed from outdated constraints," and would thereby have achieved precisely what has truly been achieved today: the disintegration of creativity in music and the disintegration of melody, which is the familiar, exciting noise for the urban people of this age.
Let there be no misunderstanding: it is not the fault of the sonata form or any other form; it is because an entire age—our own—has understood only how to dissolve traditional forms, and has never found the strength to create for itself a solid structure, a new form.
But the hero is different: he has never been a dissolver, but always a fulfiller - Beethoven did not dissolve the traditional form, but fulfilled it—and how he fulfilled it! The sonata had been a form of musical art in which the masters of a creative century had brought forth their musical world; in Beethoven, it became a creation born of worldview and passion, in which a hero bears witness to his destiny.
We must remember him again and again in this book, for he was one of the greats who created a work whose power we, his contemporaries, can scarcely yet fathom; he grasped the heroic demand as his duty, seized fate by the throat, and, an unyielding man, wrestled against the unyielding.

How painful is his gaze down upon the art of our time! Beethoven wrote the "Eroica", a work of heroic life; while it might seem that the will of our time is as heroic as his, for a "Heldenleben" (Hero's Life)[3] also features in the musical history of our time, instead, where dissolution reigns instead of commanding form, and where an effeminate, boundary-blurring age has achieved a so-called liberation from all form—that is, it has lost the masculine will to form—then the title "Heroic Life" has become an empty sound.

[3] Referring to the "Ein Heldenleben" of Richard Strauss, published in 1898 as a tone poem - while celebrated for its time as a piece of late Romanticism, and despite Strauss creating the piece while inspired by Beethoven's "Eroica", "Ein Heldenleben" is also criticized for being a self-serving and narcissistic work, given that Strauss intended the titular hero of the piece to be himself and the poem to be about his own life. - The Translator

We experience the same thing over and over again in the dozen buzzwords of modern poetry, music, and visual art: a complete dissolution, and thus phenomena that change daily, the final result of which is something akin to a state of mental decay - what is gained when one form of decay raises its noise against another?
But this is where the age was bound to end up: it has only known how to dissolve, and never to fulfill.

Beethoven is an example of the hero as the fulfiller of an inherited legacy - this is how Goethe saw it:

"What you have inherited from your fathers, earn it so that you may possess it!"

Goethe, the heroic and level-headed one, with his aversion to all upheaval and who viewed the achievements of the early 19th century with such suspicion—the representative assemblies, the freedom of the press, the growing cities—let him be another example to us of how a heroic spirit confronts history and tradition.
Luther, with his tenacious and stern deliberation; Leibniz, the still-unrecognized one with his conciliatory spirit; Bismarck, the fulfiller of the Prussian mission; Dürer, the fulfiller of the Gothic artistic spirit; Grünewald, who is grievously misinterpreted as a "revolutionary", the earthbound and spiritually fervent fulfiller of medieval painting, and Kant, the fulfiller of an age of reason - all of them are truly creative people, and all of them are heroes: they fulfill the legacy of the ages, first growing into it, and finally rising powerfully beyond it, bestowing new substance upon future times.

From heroic responsibility springs the deep-rooted connection with the heritage of one's fathers, and the Nordic man, the German, has always experienced this connection from his very core; he is like a Luther, the hero who liberated us all to be ourselves, who, bearing his heavy, oppressive weight, struggles step by step forward before pausing and asking himself: am I the only one who is wise?
Here speaks within him the heroic responsibility, this heavy struggle of conscience that makes half of the hero's life a torment; these are the moments of that silent cry: my God, my God, why have you forsaken me; these are the moments in which a man must find his affirmation solely within his own breast, and these moments mark him for life - hence this melancholy, which often refuses to depart, which a Luther experienced to the point of collapse.
Much more could be said about heroic melancholy - but melancholy is the hero's own, and he gladly conceals it.

Responsibility alone makes a man, for where it is absent, insolence and clamor thrive.
The present has forsaken its share of responsibility - in Germany, for example, people mock that English nobleman who, though no longer a believer himself, still goes to church to set a good example for his people.
The average German first sees the negative side of this: if he is religious, attending church merely to set a good example seems to him undignified and wrong; if he is non-religious, he believes a "free man" must profess his convictions - both are somewhat right.
But what is making a fuss in Germany is not the opinion of the religious, but the "free conviction" of certain non-religious people; there are so many non-believers among us who derive from their so-called freedom the right to boast of their "progress" everywhere uninvited and to mock others, and whereas in such cases the French are often spared from crude behavior by a certain sense of decorum, and whereas in

such cases the English—even if often for practical reasons—keep their distance and do not interfere, that "liberated" German has lost all sense of dignity; he must "speak his mind," and, as is well known, in our advanced age, everyone has a constitutional right to do so.
It is repulsive: this freedom from the beliefs of the charcoal burner[4] by no means implies that these "free" people have overcome uncouth, boorish behavior; it is no great achievement to cast aside what other fellow citizens continue to uphold out of tradition and spiritual contentment, for dignity begins only where freedom is synonymous with intellectual superiority and moral responsibility.
That nobleman knows what it would mean to his people if he no longer went to church: their faith would be called into question as a matter with which the educated no longer concern themselves; in this way, the example of the educated is decisive.
The responsible person knows that he sets an example in many ways and acts in accordance with this knowledge - should he, as a lord of many subordinates, as a nobleman, take away the faith and heritage of fine people, leaving them with no solid spiritual assets to fall back on? To be of a superior mind is to be of a responsible spirit! Responsibility is a major part of heroic love.

The hero's devotion to historical life stems from conscience and responsibility; he knows himself to be judged by his fathers and peers, for "the silver figures of the past" gaze upon him in the night hours of revealed revelations; he wishes to emulate his fathers in the freshness of boldness, in heroic joy, as one who adds to the realm's splendor and the legacy of power.
Whether they belong to the past or the present, his peers and the worthy competition with them are what matter to him - thus, for the hero, the thought of his people's history is the disciplinarian of responsibility and the armorer of combativeness.
As he always measures himself against his equals and seeks them in the past and present, he finds that his Nordic forefathers have remained true to heroism, despite all the vicissitudes of fate. That is a heroic virtue: to remain true to oneself and always the same.
From this perspective and will, the universe and humanity gains an eternal day of action - the idea of development can no longer stand before heroic insight.
To heroic insight, everything is an eternal beginning, a first day of the world; history is the present for the blood that has remained pure, and in the mighty duration of events, the hero lives his confidence - from his responsibility and confidence flows heroic love to him.

[4] The "Köhlerglauben", often used by Martin Luther in his writings, refers to the "little man" of the church who believes unconditionally and without proof; used non-religiously it usually means someone who is hard-headed, unwavering and naive. - The Translator

Heroic Love

This is usually the simple, quiet, and exuberant aspect of him; it is often barely perceptible and cannot be conveyed to those who lack insight.
It has flowed into the world from the eyes of the unassuming man who was our Emperor Wilhelm I; it also flows into the world from the powerful gesture of the Ninth Symphony:

"Be embraced, millions!"

The princely man with "qualities more of the heart than of the mind," who is simple and "royally noble" (Bismarck) on the one hand, and the mighty one who had fought through every primal conflict on the other: let them be guiding figures through whom heroic love, in its fullness, becomes conscious to us. From the richness of a simple heart, just as from the richness of an insatiable, imperious mind, may the fullness of love come - but let this title not be given to a yielding disposition, for creative love is rare enough; it was and will be the wealth drawn from the strength of every strong person.

How lovingly and warmly does Luther turn to the weak, to those who tremble at the sight of his fist and are not yet equal to his insight—the same man to whom the powers of his time have become hollow echoes.
Perhaps only the love of the mighty is a real deed, for what is called "love of humanity" is often worth no more than the feeling: let us stick together so that the individual will get ahead better; but the love that a solitary soul feels within itself, omnipotent above all its understanding of the pitiful goings-on—such love alone is worthy of the word "love"; this heroic love is active love born of solitude and powerful longing.

When love is discussed, our age readily brings forth its catchphrase and foreign word: "humanity."
By this it means, first and foremost, its "unbiased way of thinking," its misinterpreted command of "judge not, lest ye be judged"—this "humanity" has thus become the general excuse for every indecision, for every dubious association, and for all moral half-measures.
To our age, its "humanity" means even more than just that: namely, it is the series of legal procedures that are designed to alleviate the hardship of the economically weak - thus, the conscience of the age is appeased, for after all, now concern for public welfare can be calculated down to the last penny.
In this, the age is right, dreadfully right: instead of active love, calculable procedures have taken hold, and people are proud of it; the Middle Ages lie far behind, while the social idea "marches" on.

And yet there has always been, and increasingly so, more genuine love in the world of yesterday than in our time—namely, love that is given from the heart, not love mandated by law.
Let there be no misunderstanding: it is not social legislation that is viewed with suspicion here, for it seeks to protect the little man, who is a German, against the moneyed man, who is an internationalist. Instead, let it be understood this way: it is precisely here that attention must be drawn to the wicked heartlessness of international, transnational, foreign capital.
Through the French Revolution, which unleashed the moneyed bourgeoisie, and in the "free play of forces" that liberalism sought, heartless capitalism became possible, and with the omnipotence of cosmopolitan metropolitan capital, the active love of earlier times has become powerless.

The active love of earlier times, which is in contrast to the statutory welfare system of our time—the English historian Froude, in his biography of the English statesman Disraeli, sketched a picture of these contrasts, and thus came to elevate the customs of the Middle Ages far above our own; he describes English conditions, but with little alteration, the same applies to us Germans:

"Freedom in the modern sense, where human rights have taken the place of human duties—such freedom they neither sought nor desired.
As in an army, every person had his own position within a hierarchical structure of power and prestige, and the daily toil was heaviest where power and prestige were highest - the count did live in his castle off the income from his estates, but the count also had to bear the heaviest blows when the army went to war, and in turbulent times, he was glad if he escaped the bloodshed; he lived off his estate with the outward splendor befitting his position, but within his home, he lived as simply as his tenant, sleeping on a hard bed, eating coarse, simple food, knowing nothing of luxury and desiring none.
The way of life then was loyalty: loyalty of the knightly lord to the king, loyalty of the lord to the tenant, and of the tenant to the lord.

In the cities, the trades were organized into guilds and associations, and the price of food and the wages of domestic servants, field laborers, and artisans were set by law according to principles of fair balance. Every trade had a guild council, and strict judgment was passed on false measures and poor goods: the miller could not adulterate the flour; the price of wheat rose and fell according to the harvest, and the usurer who bought up grain to sell it later at an inflated price soon found himself in the hands of the bailiff.
For the children of the poor, apprenticeship was both education and schooling; by comparison, the most sophisticated modern school education is like copper compared to gold; boys and girls were all trained in useful farm work, through which they could later earn an honest living.
The hardships and burdens that existed at that time were not limited to a single class, but were borne in equal measure by the great and the small - a people in good health is an organic structure like the human body; if a finger says to the hand: 'I do not need you, I will go my own way, take what pleases me, and leave what I need not concern myself with,' then the owner of the hand will suffer for it.
A community, the public good, demands that every class perform the work that falls to it; when this or that person, when a large number of individuals, begin to think and act only for themselves, seeking their rights and forgetting their duties, then the dissolution has already begun.

"The fear of God built England, and never has a people been built up by any other reverence - when the Roman Catholic Church collapsed, the fear of God lived on in a Protestant form, until the Protestant faith too faded into a mere opinion and ceased to be a way of life; we still read our Bibles, went to church, zealously defended the purity of our faith, and founded societies to spread it, but faith itself joined the bustling certainty that pleasure is pleasurable and prosperity is power, and since our religious beliefs would so well regulate the affairs of the world beyond, we could well arrange our affairs in this world to our advantage.

From the Restoration period onward, landowners began to surround themselves with pomp, and employers sold it at the highest prices - selfishness first became a custom and then developed quite

brazenly into a doctrine; life became a race in which the "strongest" had a right to profit; everyone was to be set free and was to provide for themselves as best they could.
The institutions remained in place - dukes, counts, and lesser dignitaries still wore noble crowns and owned land; bishops were still the spiritual rulers of their dioceses, the parish priest still represented the Church in his parish, and the guilds continued to live in outward splendor - but all forfeited their power and influence in their pursuit of prosperity.

While competition became the sole rule of trade and commerce, a new worldview was invented to justify the changing times - master craftsmen and laborers were led to believe they could earn as much as the financiers, for once they had been serfs, but now they were free: happiness would surely come.
However, it so happened that, for whatever reason, this happiness failed to materialize - while the homes of the upper classes became palaces, and their owners lived in seclusion as a closed caste, the farmer from the village found his lot no easier, for he now belonged to no one; as the population grew, his wages sank to the lowest level at which he could barely feed his family.
The workers in the city were no better off - when wages rose, the cost of living rose with them; compulsory labor was abolished, and with it the cattle were cast into the filth of the streets.
Discontent broke out, and in a ugly way - people were told they had to keep the peace and get by; their labor was a commodity they had to sell, and its value was determined by supply and demand; people simply could not change the laws of nature, which economics had finally discovered.

This economics has now been banished to the farthest stars, but fifty years ago, doubting it was heresy, and denying it a crime condemned by all the newspapers.
Carlyle was right to speak of a "wicked doctrine": the race for prosperity continued at breakneck speed, and great fortunes were amassed as the world market opened up more and more; the working class should have shared in the profits, but instead they were deliberately taught that they had gained as much as their employers. - 'The prosperity of the people,' said the free traders and Manchester liberals[5], 'depends on free trade.'"

So much for the historian.

We are, of course, familiar with this economic doctrine, the doctrine of liberalism, which was subsequently introduced to us Germans as well: we are familiar with this "free competition," this "free play of forces," this "laissez faire, laissez aller"; finally, we are familiar with this entire shallow utilitarian theory of the state, which saw the state as nothing more than a guardian of property, for it was the doctrine of its time in the 19th century.
With unyielding, incorrigibly blind enthusiasm and schoolmasterly dogmatism, it let its cries of freedom and progress ring out throughout the entire age until they grew hoarse and turned to shrieking; it foamed with the hatred of tyrants, dripped with human rights, yet from the very beginning and throughout all time has achieved nothing but the dissolution of conviction and aspiration, replacing them with demands - it all happened according to Goethe's prophetic words:

[5] Manchester liberalism, or Manchesterism, is an economic and social movement that arose in 19th-century Britain, named after its point of origin; it espoused free trade, laissez-faire capitalism, pacifism, freedom of the press, and the separation of church and state. - The Translator

"Before the revolution, everything was aspiration; afterward, everything turned into a demand."

Liberalism has always been too feeble for creation.

By liberalism here, I mean not so much the political theories of the few superior minds who thought liberally; here, liberalism is to be understood more as what emerged in the 19th century among the petty bourgeoisie of Western nations as a kind of middle-class worldview, as a warm tradition of liberal opinions that remain accessible even to the modest mind.
It is precisely a modest enthusiasm for masculine pride and the benevolent belief that all people are born free that belongs to the true liberal, for a more serious mind cannot think liberally at all - the great men who have walked among us have never been warm and benevolent, and have tended to think as Goethe once wrote:

"The more one travels the world, the more one sees that man is born into servitude."

True knowledge of human nature has always brought deep shame to those who possess it; only the intellectual middle class thinks liberally.
Goethe could not even imagine such a thing as liberal ideas, and immediately suspected an uncreative mindset behind them:

"When I hear of liberal ideas, I am always amazed at how people like to amuse themselves with empty rhetoric - an idea must not be liberal: it must be vigorous, capable, self-contained, so that it fulfills the divine mandate to be productive!"

Liberalism should not be understood here as a single political party, for liberalism is meant here as a worldview that drew its intellectual foundations from the French Revolution on the one hand and the English free-trade school on the other; it is a worldview that, through its underlying sentiments, promoted the most shallow, the most unheroic conception of the state, the one typical of the 19th century.
With the collapse of the outdated state powers during the French Revolution, a school of political thought emerged which—to put it in Disraeli's words—believed it could elevate a people by reducing them to a mass.
The liberal worldview—one must speak of such a thing—is the view of the Western citizen, a doctrine of happiness so precisely tailored to the immediate aims of human contentment that it conceives of the state as something like a choral or beautification society expanded to a vast scale; accordingly, the art of statecraft was also seen as a more extensive, sprawling management of associations, with executive boards emerging from general, equal, and secret elections, with well-distributed offices and powers, and with recurring meetings, annual reports, and festive seasons - from this respectable and in itself harmless conception, which must have been so soothing to the soul of the German philistine, springs the belief in bliss so characteristic of every liberal and the genuine liberal enthusiasm.
The liberal is the warmly enthusiastic citizen who feels that his very presence—how much more so the expression of his progressive convictions and his boundless goodwill toward all classes and all peoples—must have a blissful effect, for this liberal thinking of the Western citizen only seeks to bring happiness to the most distant tribes through the press, through enlightenment, through public opinion, through free trade, and through popular representation.

In this contemporary thinking of the 19th century—which is possible within all parties and has not yet been ruthlessly overcome by any party in particular—in this liberal thinking, a contentment with the future is possible that is offensive to every man of deeper reflection; in liberal thinking, a belief in progress is possible that is considered an insult to every idea of historical greatness.

Liberalism is the most unheroic of attitudes - that is why it must be examined so closely here, for a heroic outlook is to regard life as a task that every man must solve independently and of his own accord.
There is no such thing as a belief in progress for heroic thinking - it is enough to have looked once upon the features of the mummy of the great Ramses to have sensed the will to rule in that forehead and nose, and the statesmanlike wisdom emanating from the entire structure of that skull, to abandon forever the foolish notion of human progress; it is enough to have observed the skull structure of our Nordic ancestors; it is enough to have examined the languages of our Nordic forefathers, the structure of the Germanic languages, to realize that there have been creative eras of the human spirit, in comparison to which one can speak today only of regression, and nothing but regression.
This belief in human progress, and even in progress through majority decisions, is an insult to the past that could only be excused by the superficiality of our time; furthermore, the belief in progress is a renunciation of self-formation into a whole, an admission of a lack of the power that enters into every beginning.
At all times, the only thing that has mattered is that peoples and nations possess a resolute spirit, which is a spirit that is always present at the beginning—a beginning that every person must will of their own accord; the spirit has never been a matter of human progress.

A heroic people wants its state to be a powerful presence and feels the lust for power; it wants its state to be a strong expression of its destiny - liberalism, meanwhile, has turned the state, which was once a force of destiny, into a procedure.
The hopelessness of every liberal view is that it sees the salvation of the state and even of “humanity” in nothing but procedures designed to serve the benefit and gain of the citizen - that is why it is so characteristic of liberalism that it also praises to peoples of entirely different kinds and histories, including peoples of far superior civilizations, the powerless procedure of its universal, equal, and secret suffrage, its two chambers, and its “modern public life” as a model to be emulated and to be warmly recommended; it prattles all the more warmly about human rights where, at the same time, financial gain flourishes for him.
Until the French Revolution, the state was a force of destiny, to be mastered by men of destiny; since the French Revolution however, the state has become an institution for utility and profit, made dependent on shifting majorities, and the state’s task has to ensure as much progress and utility as possible, so that the happiness of “humanity” may be promoted.
In connection with this, a new enthusiasm has also become possible—the contemporary enthusiasm of the 19th century, namely, that of belonging to a secure majority.

Liberalism has never embraced the state’s duty to inspire a spirit of purpose; its “free play of forces” has never meant for it a call to creative spirit and action, nor trust in the creative power of heroic men—how cluelessly liberalism stood in opposition to and in the wake of Bismarck—for ultimately, its free play of forces has never been more than an opportunity to make money.

Liberalism is the outlook of the shopkeeper and middleman, who, whether in sunshine or thunderstorm, thinks only of his business; it is a truly liberal outlook that had the saying “action brings blessing” minted on German coins since, from this saying, which in its sound and rhythm is so depressing and louse-like in its construction, speaks once again the liberal complacency:

“There I delight in the rolling carts,
in their noisy sliding back and forth,
in their ceaseless running to and fro
like a scattered swarm of ants!”

- Goethe, “Faust”

There are books that extol this swarm of ants as the highest good; they then speak of the “Gospel of Work”, yet there is more exaltation in heroic idleness than in any sort of “work” understood in this way. “Action brings blessings” is the unheroic motto of a liberal, decaying age - in response to this, Faust says: action is everything! That sounds and marches quite differently, and is the spirit of heroism.

It is characteristic of liberalism that it chooses for its platitudes the catchphrases that sound pleasant to the citizen’s ear, and thus this truly constitute the citizen’s pride: popular representation, freedom, equality, and fraternity, progress, open-mindedness, liberalism, manly pride before royal thrones, the enlightenment of the people—these are such words.
The discerning have seen through them as mere tools for making money, as shields for big capital, and this is precisely what is so nefarious about liberalism: that it has abused the words dear to the citizen for the sake of the free play of financial forces.
The liberal slogan of our day: “Free rein to the capable”—what does it mean in this age other than “unrestricted advantage to the shrewd”? Thus, liberalism bears its full share of blame for the corruption of the age, and belongs to the phenomena that a future era must ruthlessly overcome.

Liberalism would not have grown into such a scourge if it had consisted solely of freedom-mongers and those blinded by economics, but they were merely the “people’s” talkers - behind their walls, with their calls for freedom and praise full of bourgeois platitudes and the shallowest school maxims, the swarm of petty merchants teemed in silence; there thrived the shrewd ones of our founding era, who knew how to get things done and knew where the Civil Code still had loopholes; there thrived and still thrives the eternally bustling little crowd of middlemen and hagglers, whose morality is the pursuit of profit, whose fear of God is fear of the stock market, whose revelation is the so-called democratic newspapers, whose art is a business, whose "science” is a business, whose entire purpose in life is business and business and buying and selling, whose socializing is a business, whose days of leisure are a nuisance - this free play of forces must time and again disrupt the economic cycles in which they fish in troubled waters, and their advocates of freedom must time and again catch the gullible in the name of liberalism and philanthropy.
This is not the place to continue a battle of ideologies that Bismarck had taken up from the right and Lasalle from the left - let it suffice here to note that a future social order must involve the ruthless overcoming of liberal and so-called democratic pseudo-doctrines, which even Goethe had already rejected as uncreative.

Had socialism followed Lasalle, who fought so fiercely against liberalism and its "night-watchman state," socialism would not have been, in many respects, merely an intensified form of liberalism; our domestic life would be more unified and healthier, and social democracy would not be facing its decline.
Liberalism was seen through by socialists and conservatives alike, as both recognized it as the shallowest, most irresponsible, and least creative political doctrine of all time - but conservatives and socialists also lacked something decisive.
The conservatives were capable-minded, but incapable of transforming the inheritance of conservative forces into their own creative power; their thinking was not flexible enough to create in Germany the conservative worker that exists in England.
Bismarck had listened to Lassalle and forged the socialist idea into his own image from his sense of responsibility; the conservatives fought him on this point and instead negotiated with the liberals, thus fighting the wrong battle and misjudging the worst enemy of state order - they rejected, where they should have seized for their own enrichment, what the times offered in terms of creativity: the overcoming of liberalism.
In this overcoming, the conservatives should have struggled for the spirit of our manual laborers; instead, they remained a party of classes and did not become the party of conviction for the clear-headed and level-headed, which we lacked and still lack for the recovery of the state.
The socialists are much the same: they degenerated from Lasalle to Marx, and have become more of an aftergrowth of liberal expansion than a movement with roots of its own.
As Social Democrats, they blindly aligned themselves with the Democrats, failing to recognize that the financier who founded the so-called democratic newspapers thinks only of his money, never of the common good, or that by "common good" he understands only a free-trade zone for himself and his ilk; they failed to recognize that the conservative must fight against the moneyed man just as much as the socialist, and that therefore the conservative must often understand the common good in the same way as the socialist - thus, despite all its sincere concern for the little man, socialism has fought incorrectly and blindly, and has—and this was the sin against itself—often taken the money for its struggle against the conservative from the moneyed man, who cares least about the "little man" but cares much about stirring up the murky waters in which he can fish - thus, socialism has not led the working class to liberation from the rule of the big banks, which continue to conduct business as usual, and has therefore brought no real freedom to the worker.
Socialism has demanded the nationalization of many things, but not that of the monetary system - in this way, it has repeatedly made itself the henchman of liberalism and, together with it, achieved what the English Conservative Disraeli feared of English liberalism in 1853:

"If the liberals continue on their dubious path of progress, they may perhaps achieve their desired goal - but I believe they will be deeply disappointed by the result when they see that they have turned a first-rate kingdom into a second-rate republic."

Thus, the socialist idea has degenerated through its association with liberal ideas to such an extent that its own adherents would gladly be rid of their share of responsibility for our second-rate republic; they no longer sleep as soundly as before, and the republican Germans will now come to realize the truth of this other Disraeli saying:

"The conservatives' monarchy is more democratic than the liberals' republic."

It was bound to come back to haunt us that socialism was less an independent idea than a perversion of liberal ideas: social democracy has remained a mass movement that provides its long-standing members with offices in the "socialist republic", and thus ends up as a petty bourgeoisie; it has failed to become a party of conviction for the working class, and instead of turning to creative work, socialism has contented itself with hostility toward those who think differently.

The 19th century could have created a purposeful party life in Germany, a fruitful party movement, if the common struggle was against the unrestrained free play of financial forces and its doctrine called liberalism, if this struggle against liberalism had been recognized by both the right and the left as the first duty at the right time.
Overcoming liberalism within every single party and among the German people would have been necessary from both the left and the right; then we would already have the new party life that we so desperately need - the old party life is meaningless; let us create our own!

We have been led far afield to the questions of state life - from this it should become clear that a heroic worldview must find its irreconcilable opposition in liberalism, that liberalism is the most unheroic way of thinking in history, and that it dominates the current age far and wide.
Furthermore, this should also be made clear: in no other time have more high-sounding slogans been paraded about than today, yet amid all the clamour for liberty, equality, and fraternity, the age has lost the active loyalty of earlier times: it has demanded institution after institution with grand words, and has only succeeded in unleashing selfishness ever more fully.
Truly, the scholar is right: once unleashed in the age of revolution, selfishness in the 19th century first became a custom and then, without hesitation, a doctrine: liberal political theory; while the people were supposedly set free, in truth they became unhappy and desperate.
In the free play of forces, where the shrewdest prevail and not the brave, the peoples of the West were set loose in a struggle of all against all, in the wicked belief that this would increase the prosperity of the people - thus did this 19th century succeed in turning a people who once lived honestly into, on the one hand, a mass and, on the other, a conspiracy of big banks; thus has the 19th century managed to turn the loyalty of our fathers into public mistrust of all against all.
This century supposedly brought freedom, but in reality, it has turned those striving for excellence into the demanding, who, in all the appalling dependencies and inevitable circumstances of this age, have in the end been left with nothing but the demands of the day - thus, the hierarchical structure of the community, once sustained by duties, has become a heap of rubble over which the public mistrust of all against all watches, for so long has the structure been undermined from all sides - from a state of mind built on duty, the free play of forces has produced something best described as the legal slavery of all under all.

The difference in the state of affairs in the individual realms of the West is merely a matter of degree, for the slavery of all under all has become the unspoken fundamental law of the state everywhere - thus we may now recognize why Goethe could have had a certain preference for the despotic form of government:

"Despotism promotes the autocracy of each individual by imposing responsibility on the individual from the bottom up, thereby producing the highest degree of activity."

Goethe is certain of this:

"...as long as order is maintained, it matters not at all by what means."

We must consider these matters further later in the section on the art of statecraft - here, the adverse aspect of the consideration of state affairs had to be addressed first and treated in greater detail, because the conditions under examination are meant to teach us how, out of the spirit of the 19th century, this entire transformation of the times, this decline of all life, is spreading in every direction and, in Goethe's words, repeatedly issues an empty "demand" that goes nowhere - the spirit of the age, in its deluded pedantry, pretends to regulate everything through freedom and to make the world happy, yet only takes away where something was, kills where something lived, demands institutions instead of awakening a spirit, and thus always only manages to alleviate an existing need a little, instead of seeking a true cure.

Amid all the 19th-century doctrines of happiness, man is emotionally empty, selfish, and corrupt; life is devoid of destiny, lacking in adornment, barren, and has truly become so very matter-of-fact.
We all wander about as if in a vast edifice of iron beams, a train station concourse, where everyone jostles and is annoyed by the others, where the voices of vendors and newspaper sellers shout, and everything is in a hurry: the big clock ticks, the whistle blows, people want to go somewhere, to a city where business is booming; the newspaper vendor shouts the latest events, one laughs, another curses, and someone feels sick in a corner - thus does the man of this age, as it were, rush past life, always along a featureless wall, until behind a mundane wall alcove stands the carcass, who seizes his prey and casts the pieces aside.
Was there ever such a thing as the sweetness of existence that a man of the 18th century was still permitted to speak of? To quote Talleyrand:

"He who has not lived before 1789 does not know the sweetness of life."

Was the world truly once as Mozart was able to experience it; were there once, in the castles, those joyful people who danced a gavotte and could dance so nobly; were there once in the villages and huts those happy people, the farmers who sang folk songs, the girls who sang their songs:

"...the spinners in the open air,
the young maids as they weave lace."

- Shakespeare

Did such happiness ever exist? Were those times the centuries of bondage and tyrants, of enslaved souls and ignorant half-beasts; has great progress taken place since then?
It must be otherwise - those must have been the times that experienced truly selfless love.
The giver, drawing from the wealth of his strength, certain of his abundance, delighted in his words—that is the loving hero: Siegfried.
Bismarck was permitted to say of himself:

"I devote myself to the service of the fatherland."

The sacrifice of one's own self is the hallmark of heroic love - the hero has never been concerned with reward, nor with the cheers of the streets; ingratitude has always been his only reward.
Says Frederick the Great:

"My people throw stones at my head, and yet I care only for my people."

The hero does what is in him and what reality demands, and has never misjudged his contemporaries:

"I have learned to live without the world's gratitude: I have earned it, lost it, won it back, and lost it again—but I care not a whit, for I simply do my duty."

- so Bismarck had to speak in the Reichstag to the representatives of his contemporaries.

The world's gratitude is a sound that barely penetrates the solitude in which the hero lives; that he returns again and again, out of solitude and insight, to his people, allows us to sense the richness and the power of overcoming within him, which serves his love.
How immeasurable must love be, if it yearns for the human world from the motionless solitude of the deaf Beethoven!
The hero's existence is one of great renunciation and overcoming—we have sensed this. But can we fathom the horror of that renunciation that speaks from Beethoven's work; can we fathom the struggle of overcoming that must lie behind the creation of this Ninth Symphony?
Before we reach that "Joy, beautiful spark of the gods" in the final movement of the Ninth, that "Be embraced, millions!"—before such love can burst forth from the hero, the nightly struggles with Death and the Devil must have been endured - thus the hero's love is often the hard-won crown, the high mountain he has climbed, and the new, certain spirit that an evening brings as a release after a fierce, day-long struggle with fate.

Heroic Faith

Why did the heroes undertake this desperate struggle against fate? Stones were hurled at them, and this happened precisely when, in the depths of their hearts, they bore the burden for an entire generation; they were slandered when they sought to call their people to great destinies.
What, then, drove them time and again to their task? It must have been a faith so fiercely passionate beyond all reality that the words of a Church Father could be applied to such a faith: I believe it because it is so foolish.
Because it is so foolish, because all the experience of the world refutes such faith, because it can therefore flow only from the overflowing of a heart, because it can therefore flow only in the heart of a hero—that is why men and women of heroic character have taken this faith upon themselves and strengthened it into divinity and power.

Because the present has become baseless, the hero loves all that is to come; therefore, he desires a future generation that is no longer baseless - more than that, however, he knows full well that the future generation will invent new forms of baseness once it has cast off the old ones, for he knows that the struggle is eternal; even if it were so that the scales of the balance were to remain equal for eternity, when a fading generation and a coming generation are weighed—nevertheless, the hero wants to be a beginning and must believe, for the sake of his heroism, that he may one day cast his mighty sword into the scales of the future generation as a counterweight and for honor.
The heroic belief is folly, and the hero may be made a fool of by it - but he wants it no other way! He is the free man to whom the slave mentality is an abomination everywhere, and he knows the law of the free, which Fichte proclaimed thus:

"Only he is free who wants to make everything around him free and, through a certain power whose cause one has not always noticed, truly makes it free."

It is a heroic belief that all the virtues in the world must one day become a refuge for the human race, for the nobleman cannot conceive of his people as anything other than free and equal - thus, heroic belief is an ennobling force, a love for one's neighbor and for those far away, a compassion even for much that is imperfect and bowed down, which longs for the way of the free.
Fichte once spoke of this overflow of heroic love, this foolhardy faith of the hero in a universal connection of effective action, in these terms:

"Whoever you may be, you who bear only a human face, you are nonetheless a member of this great community, through whose countless intermediate members this work is also propagated—I therefore also act upon you, and you therefore also act upon me; no one who bears the imprint of reason, however crudely expressed, upon his face is useless to me.
But I do not know you, nor do you know me:—oh, just as surely as we share the common calling to be good and to become ever better, so surely a time will come when I too shall be able to do you good and receive good from you, a time when my heart too shall be bound to yours by the most beautiful bond of mutual, freely given and received love!"

Is this not the love of Rembrandt, the German Christian—a faith higher than all reason, a triumphant power of the eye that sees the comrade even in the outcast and the leper! It is a deep sense of compassion known only to those who have suffered, a heroic faith in the divine amidst baseness, a confidence born of the deep realization that baseness is nothing but a mere appearance in the transitory, and that living faith blazes like the glorious flame that consumes the body of a fallen hero.

It is the deep humility of the hero that he does not wish to see himself as the sole nobleman, for he wants to see his people as a people of equals; he is the loner who longs for fellowship with his people, who would rather accuse himself of being unsociable and devoid of friendship than give up the belief that a people living in noble fellowship is possible - thus the full streams of his love flow, and his quiet hours are like the gentle building of a Gothic cathedral.
He imagines a Christmas where his festive people and he, as one of the multitudes, make their way up to the cathedral—men and women, a noble race—where he will sing along with what everyone sings, and rejoice in the message that is to be proclaimed.
It is a king's thought born of sorrow and a ruler's spirit, of an insatiable mind; it is a mere dream, but the king who dreams it wishes it to be a source of strength in his hours of clear daylight - he does not want to lose hope in his people, because he does not want to lose hope in himself; he wants to guard this faith in a lasting unity of effective action—the king's faith and the fool's faith—like a fine crown, and he will not let go of the foreboding and bliss of a royal grace in the unfolding of events, not even in his downfall.
Such is the lot of a king - thus did Goethe believe in the king's faith:

"If anything has ever transpired,
it is yet still heard in days to come,
for it will always ring out,
when the bell is struck.
And so let this sound
cheer you, many, many!
For in the end we are all
pilgrim kings on our way to the goal."

Shall we speak further of the hero's faith?
It has always been a secret part of him - in faith and love, Beowulf suffered death for his people, and the bright blaze of a noble burning made his downfall glorious - thus have heroes and kings always fallen for their people.
The heroic faith of our Nordic past was perhaps only fully unfolded by the teachers of Christianity - while our Nordic forefathers strode across the earth as conquerors, youthful vigor is scarcely inclined toward deep experience of suffering; with Christianity, however, came an insight of pitiable things into the Germanic North—a knowledge of suffering, a compassion, a listening to silent dying, and with it an urge to help and to share, even if it cost much self-denial.
This profound gaze into suffering has transformed the youthful, fresh-faced Nordic boy into a man who, after all his conquests of lands and peoples, has ultimately won over his own deep soul - perhaps it was Christianity was what first opened up the fullness of the Nordic man's soul.
One might well say, using an example from a later time: the first movements of some of Beethoven's sonatas and symphonies, full of wild struggle, sprang from the Nordic spirit, and that the second

movements of the same works sprang from the Nordic soul as Christianity had revealed it; one thinks above all of the first and second movements of the Fifth Symphony, in which heroic destiny and heroic faith have worked.

Let us speak briefly of the faith of our age, merely for the sake of contrast - on the one hand, our age knows ecclesiastical faith, doctrinal faith, and this has always been unheroic; on the other hand, our age cultivates modern unbelief, and this is usually even more unheroic.
Ecclesiastical faith can be a force where it has not had to distort an upstanding mind - it is a driving force for thousands of people.
It is connected to the nature of every way of life that is based on a firm certainty, which brings forth people of a dignified character - thus, one experiences time and again that truly faithful people, reliable master craftsmen, honest employees, and wealthy individuals with a sense of humanity, belong to a Christian denomination.
The soothing quality of every rural environment is rooted here, and every firm certainty shapes character - we will recognize this more clearly later. Meanwhile, every dissolution of faith that is too weak to create a new, certain spirit leads to what the 19th century produced: incited masses, licentiousness, ever-new demands intended to fill a void, degeneration, and moral decay in all areas.

One does not scientifically construct a belief, as monists and others sought to do, for belief can only arise from living knowledge - thus, monistic knowledge was a stillbirth, only possible in an age that had lost the power of thought, a power that Kant's age possessed to perfection.
Simply preserving the clarity of Kant's thought should have been enough to protect us from all this scientific substitute for faith; it does not even require a second Kant - but our age is weakened in its thinking as well, which is why some university professors were able to devise new procedures for reverence before the material - to make this possible, they had to disguise the subject matter a little; they blurred the boundaries of this concept and then invented the necessary foreign term for the matter - now it flourished and had solved its world's riddles.
Enough of the faith and unbelief of these times! Neither has proven creative, and that alone is what matters.

To be faithful in the true sense—that is: to feel connected to everything, to feel essential from eternity to eternity, and to understand one's life as a path of affirmation through the World Day of events —only the hero is faithful in this true sense, faithful to destiny.
The people of this age are, by contrast, none of these; they have no destiny left, and are both stillborn and chaff.

Fate

The hero's fate is a curious thing - if we grasp his vision of fate, we grasp him and his entire world.

When he wrote the Fifth Symphony, which offers one of the deepest insights into the heroic, Beethoven spoke of the main theme of the first movement:

"Thus does fate knock at the door."

He had already proclaimed the hero once before in the Third Symphony, the "Eroica", and at that time it had sounded more confident: "I will seize fate by the throat!"
Indeed, the Fifth Symphony speaks of a somber realization, darker than the Third - that the hero and his fate had glared at each other with fiery eyes.
We have said that the hero embraces his fate as a task, his task. His love, his hatred, his responsibility, his loneliness—he understands all of these as questions from fate regarding his worth as a man and a hero.

"To will this death on the cross,
to will this physical suffering,
to will this torment of the soul -
only that will make you worthy of this kingship!"

- Ibsen, "Brand"

The hero embraces his life as his mission; the lion of fate has leaped into his path, and already he wrestles with it chest to chest, grabs it by the throat, and yet at the same time longs to embrace it fervently—his enemy, his friend.
Relentless against relentless they wrestle, they wrestle, and yet they would gladly rejoice in this battle of equals—this battle fought in immense solitude, as if in a desert.

The hero loves his fate most proudly when it seeks to crush him, for it is his own; only then does he feel how seriously it regards the struggle.
The hero believes in fate because he relentlessly desires his fate, as the Relentless One.
Free will, unfree will - such is scarcely the hero's question, for how could the believer ask this, one so certain of fate?
Because he stands at the beginning, he knows that the hero's twelve deeds, his deeds, demand his entire daily labor and all his strength; because it is part of who he is to be true to himself and always the same, he knows that his own relentless fate will remain the same—that is heroic insight.

There is a saying of the knight that he must often ponder: I go out or in through the door, and there stands Death, waiting for me.
He has experienced the Grim Reaper, who strikes with his whole bony fist, so that he may perish in the midst of life; he knows that Death stands behind every door, waiting, and where it carries one away, it is then that the hero must steel himself most of all, for within him beats a loving heart.

He, the living one, rejoices in existence above all else - but Death grants his joy the fiery realm he wishes to taste, so that he may know everything; then, before the face of Death, he comprehends the living and feels how he has been nourished from the mighty stream of existence.
When this happens to him in the midst of his life, he becomes the one who knows, who stands prepared - from then on, he lives more fully in knowledge, though his joy has suddenly grown dimmer.
He remains the believer in fate, and the trickling hourglass scarcely concerns him; he must believe in it, for his fate will bring him his death, and if he has remained true like Beethoven, then a death will befall him that is his death alone—in this way, he may go to his end as Beethoven did, for whose ending a storm raged so that he might still clench his fist as he laid dying.
The rest is silence! Are words still needed? Only the hero knows of fate—that is the pride that arms him.

Look at them, the Nordic men of whom the Icelandic sagas tell! On their relentlessly barren island, whose landscape itself is a symbol of fate, they lead a strong life; by virtue of their pure, Nordic blood, they have created a noble way of life in reality before which we must fall silent.
They believed in fate and were lavishly bold: they discovered Vinland, which was later called America; in their Viking ships they dared the boldest voyages; at home they composed the finest of the Edda; they founded a noble peasant state and preserved it through heroic laws; they brought it to pass that every individual, and even the women of their tribe, felt bound by an oath to a recklessly bold heroism; they embraced their existence as a destiny, men and women, mothers and sons.

Heroic life can spring from the idea of fate alone.
Two things are intertwined in the hero's fate: the events of the outside world—the world that assaults humanity in a thousand ways, seeking to destroy it—and the will for steadfast growth, which rises up and lives within the hero.
The hero wishes to be true to himself and remain the same in every circumstance - thus he must take up a daily struggle, growing mightier day by day, a struggle for himself and on his own behalf, a struggle, as it were, on two battlefields, one of which lies within his own breast, where the hero's morality is at stake, and the other out in the world and reality, where his concern is that he may now bring it to bear into the life of his people.
Entwined in the hero's fate are: his essence, which he eternally desires, and the manifold power of time into which he was born.
Now he must know his mission; now he must hear, from the surf of time, that one clear call that tightens his sinews, the call that must rouse him from his deepest sleep, so that he may set out, still in the night, and suddenly knows where to go - thus comes his confirmation.
Thus did the olden days live out their destiny; that is why the deeds of our fathers all shine.

From a bygone era comes this song of a mother, which became a folk song, and which testifies to the grandeur of existence in times past:

I didn't send them to school,
I didn't even laugh at them,
they don't go playing in the streets,
instead I sent them out onto the wild sea,
to seek their dearest father.

One died a bitter death,
another died of such terrible hunger,
the third was hanged,
the fourth simply perished on the wild sea,
and the fifth wandered far from home.

- "Fünf Söhne" (Five Sons), 16th century

This song and its melody can serve as evidence that a bygone era perceived a fate within and above itself; the sense of fate in this song—this experience of the Nordic people, of carrying an inexorability within themselves and facing the inexorable daily—has been lost in our time.

It goes without saying that individual people also experience their lives as fate in our time; it goes without saying that heroic lives of individual people are still possible today, but the experience of fate and heroism as formative forces of an entire culture, of an entire social entity—such a thing is impossible today. Heroism, in step with its time, was once possible, but it has now become impossible today; it is simply inconceivable that such a song, shaped by a grim fate, and as an expression of individual sentiment, as a shared experience of existence—would be adopted by an entire tribe as a folk song - in this respect, such a song, and many other folk songs, stand as evidence of the certainty of fate in earlier times, which still knew of heroic life.
One must learn to distinguish this clearly: we experienced individual heroism a thousandfold in the World War, but it was not the spirit of the times that created the heroes; it was instead a spirit of ancient times, a spirit that embodied manly combat, the expansion of empire, of loyalty among men, of heroic hatred, and ancient vengeance against the hereditary enemy; it was an outburst that astonished all those in tune with the times so much that they soon began to speak of reconciliation among nations and suspected the hero of being something "uncivilized," something no longer worthy of our "advanced culture."
Men may still exist, but the spirit of the age is effeminate—that alone is what matters in this reflection. A sense of fate is an expression of a heroic age; in contrast, a characteristic expression of our time is life insurance - to our age, the full meaning of death remains a closed door.

We have become unworthy of our fathers who believed in fate; we have lost the courage to understand life as fate.
It must be said precisely with a foreign word of our time: the 19th century has turned life—which was fate to our capable fathers—into a technique - this is true in every sense!
There is another buzzword of our time: it claims to have invented the "man of reality"—as if there were any other kind of active, real-world human being besides the hero! Here, as everywhere, a single word is shared by the heroic spirit and the spirit of the age; the will behind the word is a different will on every side.
The "man of reality" of the 19th century is the man of many processes, who treats life as a technique, who considers himself a conqueror when he is a rough-hewn man, a conqueror when he has money, a creator when he has "interested" a corporation in a new process — it is repulsive to see how modern German novelists grovel before this genre.

The literati has discovered that there was no longer any money to be made with what they call idealism, and so threw themselves into “realist literature” - in the stage play, they like to extol a certain type of “conqueror” as the embodiment of reality and practicality, and in him one recognizes the utter spiritual poverty of the age: one need only lack a conscience, to be devoid of any depth of soul, to “trample over corpses”—and the crowd marvels at a “great conqueror,” while the writer who puts this hollow figure on stage feels like a “prophet” and aligns himself with Nietzsche - what our age calls “conquest” is nothing but a lack of depth of experience, and this “stepping over” prevents one from seeing beyond the surface. What our age calls courage to face life is nothing but brazen presumption, as those who live without responsibility begin to boast of their “robust conscience” - he who leaves a girl to raise her child alone “steps over her”, and despises Hamlet for his “weak” conscience.

Hamlet’s insight that “the world is out of joint,” and Tristan’s curse on daylight and existence are born of their immeasurable vision of fate; the triumph of modernity arises so easily and without any masculine achievement that life is treated as a mere process, and strength is found lacking to live a deeper fate to the full.

But one thing has been forgotten time and again by the “man of reality”: that the awe-inspiring expansion of human dominion outward, into the cosmos, requires an equally powerful development of spiritual forces; that it is not enough to forge railways, steamships, aircraft, and wireless telephones; that one must also forge one’s soul, and do so all the more imperiously the more imperiously one subjugates the forces of the universe - this is what has been lacking!

A heroic saying by the French nobleman Montaigne goes:

“I prefer to forge my soul than to furnish it.”

The 19th century has merely furnished the hollows of its souls, for one was too powerless for any real creative act of the spirit - from the myriad processes of this century, not a single force of the soul arises. From this, only theft remained to fill the hollows, and one has abominably appropriated the creations of earlier times to play at being rich - this is evident in all areas of modern life, from architecture—which has built entire streets in our major cities as exhibitions of the styles of all ages and peoples—to philosophy, which has become “eclectic” and has cobbled together its selection of ideas here and there, across all eras and from India to America, into impotent “systems.”

People have painted and carved in wood in the Japanese style, imitated the art of the old Gothic masters, and made little effort to hide the fact that El Greco was once the guiding principle of art appreciation—and all too clearly, in El Greco’s manner, though only out of frayed nerves, they have painted things that were touted as “outbursts of artistic passion.”

In a word: they furnished their souls with the past and with much-vaunted exotic pieces and moods, instead of forging them, as must be done.

Where the artists themselves created in all styles and moods, the aesthetes of the time have behaved even more shamefully - they repeatedly replaced and rearranged the stolen furniture used to furnish their souls according to the latest fashions, and whoever could carry out this furnishing without ever straying from good taste was called a bon vivant and lived it up to the full; those without means were only merely annoyed that they could not do the same.

It is also characteristic of our time that a person who points this out and states how our mindset must change if a new era of competence is to begin is immediately questioned by the people of this age for specific proposals, for new draft laws or economic systems, or even for his “position” on the question of

plant-based or animal-based diets - again, this age expects everything from “new methods” and demands “concrete goals” everywhere immediately so that it can “take a stand” on them.
Such is the nature of those who have no sense of fate, and therefore can no longer see that new methods may well alter the manifestations of decline here and there, but cannot bring about a new rise - but the person who knows of fate has recognized that only a new mindset brings about a turn of fate.

Heroic Hatred

If one were to gauge the greatness of a hero's fate, one might perhaps say: it is revealed by the power of his love and the strength of his hatred; the hero must know both hatred and love, and the greater his heroism, the richer his love, and the more lofty his hatred.

Hatred and lofty hatred—the shrewd man who knows the times and calculates for profit prefers to remain silent about his hatred, no matter how hateful he himself may be - after all, when hatred is spoken of, the age spouts its foreign words: objectivity, humanity! For the people of this age are neither cold nor warm, but only lukewarm.
Bismarck was once asked how he had slept that night: "Badly," was his answer, "badly; I hated all night long" - o, this hatred of the hero, higher than all reason! This flame that seeks to burst forth yet holds itself back, fiercely, fiercely, until the time is fulfilled and the deed is ripe!
"I hated all night long"—oh, that grip of Thor's upon the handle of his hammer, until the knuckles of his hand turn white; that glory of heroic hatred, crackling into the world, so that the strong in their forests, the fathers, hold their breath when the oaks groan.
"I hated all night long"—this great deed of hatred that becomes creation, that, whether it wants to or not, increases the richness of life, this storm that, after the night of hatred, heralds the sun to the hero's people and the day on which they are to act—what does this age know of creative hatred? For that alone is what matters: that a work be created, whether hatred accomplishes it, or love: it matters not!
See what heroic hatred has already created for us! Should Luther have been humane? How repulsive this title sounds beside this man!

"Human! Yes, this limp word
is known today, even in the earth's remotest corner -
with it, every nobody silences you,
when he can and will create nothing.
If it were up to you, you dwarf souls,
soon every human being would be a humanist!"

- Ibsen, "Brand"

Goethe tasted this disgust and had his own thoughts when the idea of humanism was pressed too closely upon him—that shallow school of wisdom with which people in the liberal 19th century liked to associate the great Goethe himself with.
He put it this way:

"The world will become one great hospital, and we will be each other's humane nurses."

Should Frederick the Great have become a philosopher, renounced Prussia's mission, and made peace with Europe? He would have become a respectable philosopher, but the hero Frederick would have been lost to us! As he writes to his sister:

"The blows strike me so thickly as hail that my senses are nearly overwhelmed…"

But Frederick knows his duty:

"Since I am now king, I believe it is my duty to think like a king."

Thus, baseness had no part in him.

After the death of his adversary Maria Theresa, he wrote:

"I waged war against her, but was never her enemy."

That is the superiority of a royal man, which is something quite different from the so-called objectivity of the present - this king thought royally, but he was never humane!
How is a nobleman to act without this deep certainty, grounded in responsibility, that he is doing what is right, even against all the objectivity of the day, which cannot and must not act? What is all objective consideration when great decisions are pressing; what is all objective deliberation about whether a war is just when it is already raging at every border; what is all the rationality of the present, what are the so-called rational arguments, the empty pros and cons—which have always been so powerless—against the creator of a future that is to be?
Frederick the Great once said:

"Had I lived in the time of the ancient Sophists, I would have been able, like them, to present the pros and cons in every dispute - I would not have found it amusing; I would have roared like a monster if I had run out of rational arguments."

What is all the objectivity of the observer against the roar of the one who must act?
Consider this: he brings the living reason of a newly created reality into your lives; only after he has done so may the observers pass their "objective judgment" - then, perhaps, it is time for contemplation.
That is why Bismarck, facing the liberal free-trade doctrines accepted as the standard at the time, could declare with the calm certainty of a creator:

"The abstract doctrines of science leave me completely cold."

The creator will always have to confess, as Goethe did:

"I can promise to be sincere, but not to be impartial."

The hero is bound only by his own independent conscience, and he may accept judgment only from his equals, who know what is in the heart of the creator.
In the judgment of his equals, only one thing counts: the deed, the work—whether it was done by hatred or by love: it matters not!

Spinoza believed that hatred could never be a good thing - but what has hatred not already created for us!
One must read Kleist's "Die Hermannsschlacht" (The Battle of Teutoburg Forest) and also his

“Katechismus für die Deutschen” (Catechism for the Germans), these immortal feats of heroic hatred - should he have been humane and objective when he saw the Italians dwelling in Germany?

“All pastures, all places,
are whitened by their bones;
what the raven and the fox spurned,
let it be prey for the fish;
dam the Rhine with their corpses,
and let it, swollen by their limbs,
foam around the Palatinate -
that should become the border!”

He knew how a heroic people must confront its rebellious hereditary enemy, how it alone may confront it:

“Strike him dead - the Last Judgment
will not ask you for your reasons!”

From such hatred springs the deeds that shape the course of world history; the creative hatred of a Kleist is worth a thousand times more than the so-called love of humanity of the present day, this spittle-spewing of the lame-in-the-loins.

A women’s league—for what, I no longer recall—for culture or for progress or for some other catchphrase of the day—has appealed to humanity with the request that they no longer give boys lead soldiers for Christmas, claiming that this instills hatred in tender souls; the Frankfurt newspaper of the New Germans can only warmly recommend this example.
One can cite aesthetic reasons against lead soldiers, but that is not the aim of such a campaign: what it is after is the slow, secret emasculation of our spirit, and it is to be achieved through that stock of humanizing platitudes that seek to portray hatred as something horrific and abominable, and viciously persecute the power of hatred everywhere.

“The word ‘pure’ became so full of lies and deceit,
just as the little word ‘love’ is today,
with which one cleverly conceals
the weakness and deceit of one’s own will.”

- Ibsen, “Brand”

This age is effeminate—we recognize this more and more. With effeminate secrecy, all boundaries are blurred, and the landmarks concealed and hidden, which have separated man and beast, man and woman, good and evil, people and the masses, the creative spirit and the narrow-minded, race and race, culture and culture.
A great wave of understanding, forgiveness, and blurring is on the way, and its scouts, sent ahead, are called “a love of humanity”, or in more educated terms, “humanity”, “brotherhood of nations”, “free

love", "free play of forces", "women's education", "the conscience of humanity", and "a clear path for the capable."
A seducer of women once revealed from his experience that images and concepts with blurred boundaries, skillfully arranged, are the most seductive words: "ocean," "star," "eternity".
The current age is a woman; she loves the vague and is instantly seduced when one speaks to her of freedom, progress, eternal peace, and such things; these are all the vague buzzwords that have led our time to the point where it—as has been aptly put—has learned best to be warmly concerned for degenerates, criminals, the unstable, the feeble-minded, whores, and the work-shy, while the great creators, the people who strove for fulfillment, have died in misery - our age wants nothing to do with these silent dead, and eloquently points to the large sums it has paid for "cultural purposes," praising its ministries of public education—that is, its institutions.

This entire age—as we have seen—cultivates institutions rather than convictions and, when considering them, speaks much of love for humanity - it claims to have overcome hatred.
Yet it has never had the strength to hate in the first place! The spirit of this age likes to take a scientific approach to hatred and declares it to be atavistic, a relapse into primal humanity; that it is indeed animalistic, a disgrace whenever it seeks to stir in an "intelligent" person.
An "intelligent" person is supposed to be too good for hatred; he is supposed to act "objectively," or better yet, "impartially" - oh, these intelligent and educated people of our time: a wealth of knowledge and a lack of substance! Just as life is, so is knowledge: a technique, a procedure.
At best the admission is made that "knowledge is power"—however, in the present day, this means as much as: the shrewd one gets ahead!
One can speak all languages and study linguistics—for especially in Germany, the multilingual is highly regarded—yet be insensitive to the structure of the German's "general and heroic language" (Fischart), as an earlier era called the German language; one can study the music history of all peoples and yet fail in the face of a folk song; one can study the cultural history of all peoples and not sense how much culture speaks from the features of a farmer - thus, one can see that the contemporary spirit of the present is cultureless.
Why these examples: the present day quarrels much about education, pays high sums for a range of educational institutions, is as thirsty for knowledge as it is irreverent, and so enlightened that it has entirely forgotten the sense of awe that Goethe called "the best part of humanity" - knowledge has spread far and wide, and yet—and perhaps precisely for that reason—despite all the effort expended on education, this age has forsaken the legacy of the spirit that our fathers had won for a mere trifle.
The educated people of the present day are under a curse, because all their education is nothing more than a furnishing of their spiritual voids: it is precisely the educated who are overflowing with objectivity and humanity; it is they who have turned the lofty command "love your enemies" into a spineless lack of conviction; it is they who—as they have rightly been recognized—can no longer find within themselves the strength to say no, because all boundaries have become blurred for them.
From this flaccid education and this all-forgiving attitude, the literature of the age crafts its products - it sounds scornful when the technical term "heroes" is applied even to the main characters, these weaklings of their literature, to these weaklings whom one is supposed to understand humanely and to whom one is supposed to forgive everything.

The strength to say no is lacking, and before every decision—for decisions forge the soul—especially all-or-nothing decisions, especially clear left-or-right choices, the present age takes flight—"Gabriel Schillings Flucht!"[6]
The education of the age bears a good share of the blame for this flight mentality: it has softened rather than steeled, wearied rather than refreshed; it has repeatedly fostered the spirit of objectivity, which ultimately contributed to this flighty mentality - the level-headed calm, the deep sense of justice in our Nordic blood, has thus degenerated over the course of our history into the lack of conviction of our age.

This overly just prudence is a flaw in the German character - Frederich Klopstock recognized it as a flaw:

"Never has any other country
been as just toward foreign lands as you.
Do not be too just! They do not think nobly enough
to see how beautiful your flaw is!"

Since Klopstock's time, it has only grown worse - Bismarck experienced this in politics and had to warn time and again:

"The tendency to become enthusiastic about foreign nationalities and national aspirations, even when these are realized only at the expense of one's own fatherland, is a political ailment whose geographical spread is, unfortunately, limited to Germany."

How much of the strength we should have devoted to what is native and authentic have we squandered on the foreign! Broad-mindedness, the simple, harmless spirit of youthful freshness, has become the downfall of the Nordic people.
Like "Hans im Glück"[7], the German people have walked through the history of the West, always giving up the better, native good for the lesser, foreign good: we have given up the native runes for the Latin script—from which the Nordic spirit, however, has once again formed the Gothic, the German script; we have given up the hard, heroic alliteration for the soft end rhyme—which the heroic spirit, however, has learned to harden again; we have given up the high culture of our paganism for a Christianity that had degenerated, that had come to us in impurity from the decay of the peoples of the South; we have given up the high pagan culture of the Viking Age, just as we have given up the incomparable Nordic animal ornaments, for inferior southern forms of jewelry; we have abandoned the German concept of the state of the first German emperors in favor of the concept of the state of a "Roman Empire of the German Nation"—a concept so wrong for us that it has squandered our magnificent powers.
Thus, we subsequently exchanged our native German law for Roman law, thereby laying the foundation for the misery of our present capitalist conditions, and thereby abandoning the German idea of kingship in

[6] Referring to a drama by the same title written by Gernhart Hauptmann, written in 1912 - the work concerns characters in an isolated coastal setting awaiting the arrival of a Gabriel Schillings, as they learn more about themselves and each other. - The Translator
[7] "Hans im Glück" is a story featured in the Brothers Grimm's collected tales - in summary, the story is about a man receiving his pay and using his money to buy and trade for multiple things in a frivolous way, leading him to a point where, as he carries a heavy grindstone and fieldstone, he accidentally drops both into a well; the story ends with the man happy that he doesn't have to carry the stones anymore, but also without his money as he makes his way home. - The Translator

favor of a foreign concept of majesty; thus, we have abandoned the Gothic art of our Nordic blood in favor of foreign Renaissance art, thereby burying the wellspring of deeper artistic sensibility; thus, in the 16th and 17th centuries, we repeatedly traded Germanness for German identity time and again, only to end up with Italian culture; in the 18th century, once again, we traded "German art and style" for Hellenism, the German civic spirit for cosmopolitanism, and so on and so forth; above all, since the age of the Revolution, we traded the diligent "striving" of our fathers for the clamorous "demand" of an age of the press.
At last we had reached the point where a straw hat, gloves, boots and other goods were only worth anything if they bore the stamp of London or Paris - thus our cosmopolitanism, our humanitarian ideals, our objectivity and humanity have brought us to the point where we have become odious and despised among the nations.

Bismarck had warned and warned again:

"I would like to recommend one guiding principle to the gentlemen who so readily seek their ideals beyond the Vosges: what distinguishes the English and the French is that proud sense of national honor, which does not so easily or so frequently lend itself to seeking exemplary and admired models abroad, as happens here among us."

Friedrich Hebbel had already recognized how contemptible our cosmopolitanism was:

"What made us contemptible throughout all of Europe; why were we given the philosophical title of honor? Surely only because of our premature cosmopolitanism, which made us play the magnanimous among a crowd of egoists, often causing us to give away both sword and scabbard at the same time. I think it is high time to bid it farewell; we need not worry that it will be hired elsewhere, for we can have our darling back at any hour."

Truly, it is time to reflect that one who wishes to act must find the courage to decide, and one who wishes to act on a grand scale must also find the courage for bold hatred - it is easy to present oneself as a citizen of the world, an all-understander and an all-forgiver, when one cannot find the strength for an either-or, for a firm refusal - only he knows the overflow of love who has lived days inflamed with hatred; the so-called love of humanity of a lukewarm person is rather a rot of the soul.
But the noble person also wants to live by his hatred - as Luther once said:

"This life is not a state of health, but a process of becoming healthy; not a being, but a becoming; not a rest, but an exercise - not everything glows and shines yet, but everything is being swept clean."

Such a healing, training, sweeping force is hatred, as it were a sense for perceiving the world - the hater feels primal, and that is no reproach, as the educated age imagines, but rather it means: he feels full of life, whole, invincible, and, like Hagen von Tronje[8], laughs in the face of death.

[8] In the Norse account of Hagen (or Högni)'s death in the sagas, he is said to die laughing as his heart is cut out from his chest. - The Translator

Hatred is a sense of the soul - there is no wholeness where a sense is lacking, and man is meant to be whole; all passions are given to us for discipline, and true hatred can draw out the noble, for it is the hereditary enemy of all that is sluggish and weary.
Just feel how it brings you to life when you tighten your helmet, how it burns away all inner conflicts and half-desires, how it burns away all the decay of the soul in an instant, and forges a strong man out of you, one who craves action! By their hatred you shall know them, for a man is worth only as much as his hatred.
That our present age understands only the hateful—that is what makes it so pitiful; the hater has always been rich, for hatred is the vigor of youth.

"Give me back those unbridled instincts,
that deep, painful joy,
the power of hatred, the might of love,
give me back my youth!"

- Goethe, "Faust"

Heroic hatred is creative and victorious, even if it exterminates and burns! The hero may destroy, for he knows himself to be the beginning, and possesses a creator's courage within himself; he is the tree that needs light for its branches and must stretch upward, and he is the good tree that bears good fruit in its season.
The hero's hatred is creative, whether it burns in his breast or falls upon his enemy: the goal is always the deed. Yet the heaviest victories are prepared for his hatred within his own breast and are called: the hero's morality - we shall hear of this later.

There will be no salvation and no beginning until our age has regained the power of hatred; this requires a different kind of education than that of our time, for the education of our time has always been nothing but a vast store of knowledge, and has never been fit for the art of living.
An era derided as old-fashioned once spoke of the art of living as "the serious conduct of life," as Goethe wrote - this phrase may still exist, but the meaning is lost.
To lead one's life means: to impose a law upon things of one's own accord, and not to be determined by them - while people of our time may suppose that they are imposing their law on the universe through the "gigantic development of technology," how pitifully dependent are they on their technology, on their many procedures.
A pure-blooded Indian can lead the life of a contemplative in a state of needlessness and with almost no possessions, and this wisdom of the Aryan Indians, before which our scholars stand in awe, comes from people of the simplest daily life; in contrast, we would be mere fragments, and would truly prove to be the "mass-produced goods of nature" that Schopenhauer so dreads if we were ever to live as simply as an Indian sage.
Technology has already half-consumed our souls, and as this "age of technology" continues, we are far from being the masters of technology who are as capable of guiding their own lives as they are of handling these thousands of new processes.
The very essence of a way of life demands that a person have, as it were, struggled for the Platonic idea of himself, that he know his eternal law, so that in all the twists and turns of fate he may remain the master

of his will and the shaper of his environment; meanwhile, the people of our time call themselves, in their bastardized language, “a product of the milieu”, and have gone to great lengths in their writing to depict the “milieu” that determines human beings with great precision.

The current age knows no way of life that is masculine, and instead knows only a response to all events that is effeminate - one waits to see where “it” will lead and, since one considers oneself shrewd, hopes to “cut a fine figure” everywhere and to “find the right stance” toward all people and events.
The people of this era constantly remind me of the coffeehouse owners in the period before a Reichstag election, who do not want to fall out with anyone and therefore offer a stock of carefully chosen and noncommittal phrases with a friendly smile, taking a stance now on what their Center Party guest says, now on what their Democratic guest says, now on what their Communist guest says - after all, his agreeable manner and the secret ballot secures him, just as the agreeable manner and the sleepy conscience secure the people of our time; the coffeehouse owner feels no obligation to make any binding statement, and the people of our time feel no obligation to a way of life.
Thus, despite all their skillful taking of positions, no sense of destiny has entered these people; they do not understand what it means to shape themselves and their environment, and to will a new certainty through their own power is foreign to them - they stand in a thousand relationships, but never at its beginning; they take a stand a thousand times on this and that, and their whole life is a reaction to events, but never the effect of their own power.
It goes without saying that every thinker must first take a stance toward what already exists; but what matters is whether this constitutes his entire work, or the greatest part of it, or whether it extends into new beginnings - Goethe and Kant are only minimally explained by describing how they recognized and overcame the rationalism of their time, and Plato’s work is more than the overcoming of sophistical opinions.
The education of our age has led us only to reevaluation, at most to reevaluation: the education and upbringing of the 19th century has weakened rather than strengthened, exhausted rather than refreshed, and has made us harmless rather than combative and vigorous in creation - we have been objective where we should have hated, and forgiving where we should have condemned.
In a fine book from 1831, much of which remains relevant today, in Paul Pfizer’s “Briefwechsel zweier Deutschen” (Correspondence Between Two Germans), the following is written:

“When Stapß dared to attempt the well-known assassination of Napoleon at Schönbrunn, the latter believed that such a mindset was common among German youth and was taught in every school, no doubt because he felt—and knew from Spain—that nothing is more natural to a nation than hatred for the enemy and destroyer of its rationality - how much more at ease he could have been in this regard, had he known our humanistic-philological educational system.”

This is not the place to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of our humanistic-philological education however, for the goals of education will be outlined in the second part of this book.

Nineteenth-century education has freed us from “the power of hatred” - that characterizes it sufficiently! It suffices to say here that English education, which aims at practical life skills, is more suitable: even if many educated Germans feel superior to English education, if the English school truly teaches the young Englishman that other peoples may indeed have had luck now and then, and that other peoples may

achieve this or that respectable state of affairs, but that only the Englishman is the man who deserves honor, and that therefore being English imposes all the more obligation—has the English school not done the right thing?
Let this serve as a lesson to us, though that is to say, not for imitation, but rather for sober insight.

Only when hatred—heroic hatred—is once again permitted to be taught will there be a new beginning for Germany!

Heroic Morality

The hero stands at the dawn of a world.

Even at the beginning of the 19th century, which brought us “objectivity” and a spirit of escapism, there lived the thinker who struggled most passionately, almost violently, for the heroic idea: Johann Gottlieb Fichte - his “Addresses to the German Nation” alone could give rise to a heroic national character among the Germans, for he understood the world as the conceptualized substance of our duty.
To view the world in this way means to stand at the beginning: the world ahead of us and the urge toward this world within oneself, certain of duty! Thus, fate takes shape.
Whoever has understood the world as the conceptualized substance of his duty does not ask for the judgment of his contemporaries, does not think the well-thought-out, nor does he feel the often-experienced, but begins his own day with his own affirmation - thus, a culture of competence could emanate from every hero, exerting its influence on political and intellectual life.
The hero wishes to remain true to himself and always the same; therefore, the principle of his action could be as Fichte formulated it:

“Act in such a way that you could conceive the maxim of your will as an eternal law for yourself.”

This is the idea of steadfastness that Wolfram von Eschenbach proclaimed in “Parzival”: to forge anew each day, from the forces of the spirit, a single, strong soul—this is the mark of the free man.
Steadfastness is not a possession: it is a task, the knight’s duty of bearing the shield, of which Wolfram speaks - only he is equal to the task of existence who knows his will eternally and stands “bold and cold above the ruins of the universe” (Fichte).
To overcome the restlessness within oneself, to wrestle with the doubts within, to find the yes and the no, to seize one’s all-or-nothing—or, to speak in a certain reworking of Platonic expression, to rein in the white, steeply soaring and the black, downward-dragging steeds of the soul—that of the spirit and that of the senses, the two noble beasts—before the chariot of his fate, guiding them on a steady, upward journey—that is morality, and who could be a more spirited charioteer than the hero!
It is up to us to become as resolute as he, as there is enough to overcome: first and foremost, we must overcome the spirit of the age that broods within us all, like a lindworm that only a man of integrity can slay.
I fear there is a whole brood of lindworms for each of us to face, if it is not already too late - the intoxicating spirit of the age will soon have gnawed away at every conscience, and then it will be too late! Then all the people will have become a mass and sludge, and life, which was once defined as fate, will be nothing more than a kind of excitement over what the next advertising drum of the times will be blaring.

The Devil used to be slower; now he sends his drum-beaters one after another through the streets of the big cities, whose spirit has become omnipotence; he has already tried to persuade Faust to think liberally, to choose excitement over fate and become a capitalist:

“I chose myself a capital city like that,
a city which, at its core, is a bourgeois feeding ground, with crooked alleys, pointed gables,
a limited market, cabbage, turnips, onions;

butcher shops where the flies swarm,
feasting on the fat roasts -
there you'll find, at any hour,
stink and activity for sure.

Then vast squares, broad streets,
pretending to be grand;
and finally, where no gate restricts,
suburbs stretching boundlessly -
there I delighted in the rolling carriages,
in the noisy back-and-forth sliding,
in the ceaseless back-and-forth running
of scattered swarms of ants.

And when I led, when I rode,
I always appeared in their midst,
and was revered by hundreds of thousands."

But Faust has recognized the masses of the cities:

"That cannot satisfy me!
People rejoice that the people multiply,
nourish themselves comfortably in their own way,
even educate themselves, enlighten themselves -
and yet, they are raising nothing but rebels."

Once more, Mephisto entices:

"Then I built, grandly, self-assured,
a castle of pleasure in a delightful spot.
Forest, hills, plains, meadows, fields,
magnificently transformed into a garden.
Before green walls, velvet carpets,
paths of cord, artfully cast shadows,
cascading falls, paired from rock to rock,
and water jets of every kind -
venerably it rises there, yet at the sides,
there it hisses and trickles in a thousand little ways.

Then I would have the most beautiful women
build cozy little houses;
there I would spend boundless time
in the sweetest, most convivial solitude.
I say' "women,' for once and for all

I think of the beauties in the plural."

Faust then rebuffs him with the imperious words:

"Bad and modern! Sardanapal[9]!"

It befits the hero to think of deeds, of dominion and property — so says Faust, who has recognized that "Enjoyment makes one base!", who has overcome the intoxicating spirit of the age within himself - our time has fallen prey to the spirit of intoxication body and soul; that is why everything has become so foul under its hands.

Dionysian lust has turned into what they call sliding dances—the educated have foreign names for them; thus, the nobility of dance that an earlier age possessed has been given up for dances without grace.

The noble unleashing of the senses that an older age knew has turned into the various forms of debauchery practiced by the hedonist—life has become a technique, and thus debauchery too a procedure, regulated by supply and demand, determined by capitalism, and, with the pragmatic people of the age, has become matter-of-fact, "devoid of pathos."

The debauchery of earlier times could still be an experience, had its own fun, its thigh-slapping pathos, and its colorful gallows birds, who could sacrifice something so that it ended gloriously in a gutter on a gray morning—the times have forgotten even that in their objectivity.

The "simple little brother" is in a pitiful state - he wants to feast:

"If I had the empire,
plus the customs duties on the Rhine,
and Venice were mine,
it would all be lost;
it must be squandered!"

At most it finds a few narrow-minded philistines who grin dully at the simple little brother like he's a buffoon—they would never understand the exuberance within him; it may also find a few ex-convicts who let themselves be paid.

The great hedonists of earlier times are gone: the poet Hafiz is dead, and were he alive, the filth would suffocate the pure; the poet François Villon is dead—he was the comrade of criminals and became a murderer himself, but he remained an enthusiast and a poet all his life: what would he do today among the soulless criminals who exploit scientific methods?

Till Eulenspiegel is dead, François Rabelais is dead—the juicy bawdy joke is lewd in our time, and wit has become stale or salacious; Baron Münchhausen is dead—people lie a lot today, but always only for "practical" purposes.

The simple little brother is dead: the drinking buddies, the pious mercenaries, are dead.

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[9] Sardanapalus was the last king of Assyria - according to the ancient Greek historian Diodorus, Sardanapalus was a decadent ruler whose lifestyle was so distasteful that it led to three peoples within his kingdom, the Medes, the Persians, and the Babylonians, to rebel against him; as the rebels approached his palace to capture him, Sardanapalus built a funeral pyre containing all his riches, eunuchs and concubines, set it on fire, and then threw himself into the flames. - The Translator

"If I am shot down,
shot down on the wide heath,
let them carry me on long spears,
for a grave is ready for me -
let them beat the Bummerleinbum[10] for me,
for that I prefer nine times over
to all the priests' grumbling!"

- "Von Landsknechten", 16th century

The last Bummerleinbum has long since faded away; German beer still flows, but into other throats; the age has forgotten how to creatively shape fine intoxication into a grand joke by the grace of God; the intoxicated man of the present betrays himself and the spirit of the age so repulsively that the nobleman turns away.
The power to experience lust as a force of destiny is gone - Don Juan has become a thing of the past. While there are a few dandies who consider themselves great seducers, they merely overlook the fact that there is not much to seduce in the "modern woman" and, above all, that often only her purse is seduced, not even the crease in her skirt.
What does our time even know of Don Juan anymore? He who experiences his lust as a subtle destiny and pleasure as a subtle insight—what does our time know of the courage required, with a sharp mind and noble blood, with a deep understanding of guilt and atonement, to seek to comprehend life through the senses and to live courageously through lust and transgression until shattering against the handshake of the Stone Guest[11]!
The age is, after all, lumbago-stricken, and those afflicted with lumbago know only half-pleasure and insipid delights—with these one more easily sidesteps one's conscience, to which one presents one's repugnances as "little missteps" and "flings."
Let there be no misunderstanding: the figure of Don Juan is not presented here as a figure of heroic life; Don Juan has never known the responsibility of the nobleman, and is devoid of all that love which has been called heroic love.
Certainly, he sins - but nevertheless: he sins wholly, and the sensual experience is to him, like to Faust, "merely a parable"; his concern is the knowledge of the world, and he believes that one day he will be able to grasp that knowledge in pleasure; he knows of the curse of his kind.

Let it be understood thus: an earlier age was able to see curse and greatness in such a figure, to foresee fate, guilt, and atonement in this life, and to know of the retribution of that Stone Guest; our time, on the other hand, does not sin, but merely lets itself go; it does not seek to know through the pleasure of the senses, but seeks only the repulsive stimuli of a repulsive sensuality.
Filth covers all contemporary activity, and sincerity is lacking in both enjoyment and action - thus, the sensuous life of our time has degenerated into the most repulsive sensuous life in our history; this is what Don Juan's figure was meant to demonstrate.

[10] An onomatopoeic word for a drum. - The Translator
[11] A stone statue in the Don Juan story who comes to life to punish the protagonist for his hedonism. - The Translator

In “Kaiser und Galiläer” (The Emperor and the Galilean), Ibsen saw through the sensual life of our time - if a man like Emperor Julianus were to celebrate festivals of pure pleasure in the service of beautiful gods, he would find, instead of ardent women, only a pack of whores demanding payment—for the life that was once a destiny has become a transaction.
Sensual pleasure, like hatred, can spring from base or noble blood, and here too, as with hatred, it depends on the character: it all comes down to the individual; it depends on whether the senses have the man or the man has the senses, whether the black steed of the soul is more powerful than the driver, or whether the reins rest in a firm hand.
The senses are noble, but the disposition may be base; the black steed of the soul could be as magnificent as the white one, but the driver may be a weakling.

Here lie the victories that confirm the hero, for he stands at the beginning and his senses are fresh - we have recognized that he is primal man, that is, hot-blooded, whole, strong, and undaunted; wild man’s blood flows through his heart, and the creative is the essence of his being, the procreative.
To him, lust is a force of fate, and the strongest lust is his masculine desire for a woman; he is the earth-born one, who thinks simply and plots to steal a bride: he believes that feminine beauty is destined for him, because he has the deeds to prove it - thus, his wild blood may hurl him into the primal struggle of the sexes, and it may make him wrestle for the meaning of man and woman, which is to be experienced, but never to be reasoned out.
It is a primal struggle, and many fall, but it is a struggle nevertheless, and a hero is combative; it is a conflict of sensuality that can become the Devil’s, but let the hero only sense the enemy, and he will fasten his helmet more securely, take up the fight, and win the field - and on the field of sensuality, he will reap conviction.
Thus, in the struggle of these forces, since in a heroic life the deed comes first and the spirit of responsibility, moral tension arises - morality is less a state than a struggle.
This struggle lies in the nature of the sexual forces, which are part of man, in that they seek to break free without restraint - herein lies the questionable nature of marriage for some men of heroic blood, although the man of conscience will still experience monogamy as a duty, as all the more deeply and more powerfully the male blood flows within him.

There is nothing to be gained by seeking to conceal the truths of sexual life; it is truly the experience of many a man of keen senses who has taken a wife that the allure of other women sometimes exerts a more powerful effect on him than the physical being of his own wife; it is also the experience of many a woman who is a full-fledged human being that she must wrestle with the wild, unbridled forces of her blood if she wishes to remain true.
The essence of sexuality in human beings is the pleasure in the unrestrained outburst of the senses, even if it costs life and dignity, and this desire cannot in itself be condemned, for it is part of our nature, embedded within us as a part of our destiny - it must also be stated that Don Juan and Carmen live their lives as fate, and that they are genuine human beings of a more sincere nature than the many frail and respectable citizens who consider themselves righteous, though are merely pitiful; it must also be stated that marriage can be a renunciation, and is always a renunciation, for individuals of a rich and overflowing nature—a renunciation of much vitality that is worth experiencing.
It lies in human nature that one wishes to feel, in full vitality, the forces that all work within one as a desire, that every force of one’s blood wishes to have its experience, which should be richly refined;

however, it is also in the nature of marriage that the two people who enter into it cannot always awaken all of the other's forces to life, and when this is felt, there is a deprivation and, from it, a renunciation, or there is a dissolution of the marriage—both can be heroic.
To see the hero only halfway is to forget the stature of his body, which constitutes half of his destiny - it is a heroic worldview that expressed it:

"He who has thought the deepest loves the most alive."

- Hölderlin

As the living one, the hero goes his own way and feels with all his senses that every experience must become the wealth of body and soul, hence his pure joy in physical strength, his derision of all intellectual types and all who distrust the senses, his distaste for those who are not hearty eaters, and his unbridled courage for every feat of physical strength - the strength of his body, to which he awakens anew every morning, delights him more than any wisdom one can conceive, even if one is no hero; he also wishes to experience his senses vividly every day.
And yet, the hero seeks all the serene happiness of intimacy, however much he may long for it, only when he is certain of his work; it is pleasure that he seeks last of all - the essence of morality, and thus also the question of sexual life and marriage, is determined for the heroic man by his work and by the thought of his people.
For him, monogamy must become for him the embodiment of a noble way of life, for the heroic spirit knows of responsibility, having learned that unbridled freedom never creates order, and that the unbridled pursuit of self-indulgence drains the Nordic man of the strength of his soul - Don Juan remains a knight and Carmen remains true to himself, but they have lived among peoples who lose nothing of the soul's strength when they burn their lives like torches at a festival.

The Nordic man is the questioning man, for whom life is made most difficult; it is not easily granted to him to live beyond good and evil, but instead he must choose.
Throughout his life he is faced with decisions, and must struggle anew for his freedom every day - that is why, in life and art, beauty often remains a distant ideal for him, akin to a rare celebration, and sometimes a longing that consumes him.
It seems that creation born of beauty is not meant to be a goal for him, that Dionysian lust is not in his nature; instead he must live in what is stronger: to create from the most vital power of the sense of existence.
The hardest struggles await him if he wishes to remain true to himself and always the same, and the greatest moral tension reigns in his soul; only the powerful shaping of what is within him constitutes a heroic life for the Nordic man, for unrestraint weakens the creative power of his mind.

Monogamy is a goal of the shaping of the sexual; this shaping alone is what matters if civilization is to arise.
Much more could be said about marriage, for what has been said remains only a superficial view, lacking depth and height, as long as marriage is not seen as the will toward future generations, which are to possess the "Great Health" of body and soul - however, there is not enough space here for all of this (and I have had to consider these matters from this perspective in my books on racial studies, and especially in

the section “Race and the Choice of a Spouse” in my “Der Nordische Gedanke unter den Deutschen” [The Nordic Idea Among the Germans]).
The marriages of our time may remain unconsidered here, for they are often business-like arrangements, customs rooted in tradition, but rarely marriages born of necessity and conviction - yet marriage is meant to be a moral formation and a vision for future generations, and morality is a formation born of conviction, not a mixture of tradition and half-measures.

Morality is also not conditioned by evolutionary history, as the age likes to assume - the current age snoops around at primitive man, indeed even at the four-handed ape, and asks him about the nature of morality, then traces the entire history of human civilization from the group marriages and horde era of primitive human packs to the patrilineal conditions of roaming hunter-gatherer tribes, from there to the matrilineal conditions of sedentary tribes, and so on through the changes in economic and agricultural conditions up to the present day.
One further inquires into the nature of morality among the indigenous peoples of all continents, and likes to recount how, for example, among the Bushmen, what the Central European calls immoral, is considered moral, and what the Central European calls moral is considered immoral - people are happy to interpret the repulsive things they do as a return to primal humanity, yet forgive them in this context.
There is much outcry over the morality of masters and slaves, over so-called social ethics, and, after all, an ethic of materialism and monism has been established and extolled in all seriousness—I fear that in all this commotion you have forgotten only one thing, namely that morality is not found here or there and does not come with outward gestures, but that it is “within you,” a form arising from disposition.
The noble person knows this - therefore, just let him stand before a yes or no, before a decision, and he will wrestle for guidance:

“Turn inward at once,
and there you will find the center,
which no noble person may doubt.

You will find no lack of guidance there,
for the independent conscience
is the dawn of your moral day.”

- Goethe

This means the desire to “conceive one’s will as an eternal law for oneself”: to experience the mighty duration of that one World Day as one’s own moral dawning.

To set boundaries for oneself between God and the Devil, good and evil, hatred and malice, love and indolence, between spirit and matter, between man and woman, between heroes and weaklings—that is a man’s work.
Blurring boundaries is a woman’s whim; this age sets out to blur where it finds boundaries, to understand and forgive where it should condemn, and to overcome itself; its shallow concept of development aids it in this.

The concept of development had its place and its purpose where it does good, but in the hands of the current age, it has become shallow, blurring values and acting effeminate; it seeks to draw its blinds like a tortoise over hero and weakling, since both, in the grand scheme of things, would have a common ancestor - the idea in itself is not bad, but it does not explain the hero, nor even the weakling; a dozen evolutionary lines do not yet explain a single disposition.
It is delightful to see how the people of our time practically take refuge in the idea of development - if one tells them that this or that celebrated figure is insignificant, they, having cornered the subject in question, breathe a sigh of relief by placing him in a developmental lineage and know him to be safe.
The path along the main ridge of a mountain range must often descend deep into the valley—the people of our time see only this path in their idea of development, the artificially constructed one, and take such delight in it that they constantly gaze upon it and point to it, without even noticing whether they were up on the heights, where the vast view shines, or whether they were down in the valley.
The people today follow this path, the concept of development, up again and down again, and everything is seemingly always upon this equally important path, the artificially constructed one, which delights this man of a time that has become toothless.

I was at an exhibition of the much-praised, authoritative Expressionists and found in all those paintings, admittedly, something metropolitan, namely opium, cocaine, brain softening and excitement instead of fate, the end instead of a beginning, the blurring of boundaries instead of form—all the familiar blotches of a decaying age, but nothing else; I spoke of this to my companion, who had fallen for the bait, explained myself further in conversation, and finally had him on board with the idea of development: that Expressionism had been necessary as a developmental backlash against Impressionism.
This is how far the art criticism of our time has come: the buzzword is dropped, the advertising drum beats loudly, one marvels and marvels for a while longer, and suddenly the “experience” has become conscious, classified, and clear: this is exactly how the development had to continue.
The newest thing was always necessary as a noisy drum to scare away the penultimate drummer - “Die Zeit” is right after all then: that the artistic selection of the age must be viewed solely in terms of developmental history, and all authentic art of the 19th century was always just as necessary in terms of developmental history, as every creative work, necessarily—that is, uncompelled, unmade—arises from beginnings.

We have advanced far toward the art of which we shall speak only later - for now, we recognize how everything is interconnected, and how the coming day may also be a great day of virtue for art that is illuminated by conscience - thus we already sense how great is Plato’s thought, in which the Good that ought to be is the highest Idea, in which all other Ideas participate.
The Good that ought to be, the capable and the righteous—who should desire to bring it into reality more than the capable one, for whom everything is a beginning of creation, the hero!
He must not abandon the task of creating the capable - therefore, he must not give up on himself, even if the blows strike as thick as hail, as they struck Frederick the Great; it is a heroic duty to preserve oneself, and to give oneself up is the original sin.
Yet there are not infrequent hours in a hero’s life when he thinks of an end, of a ceasing of breath for eternity; these are the hours when Death appears to him like the soother who brings the wild beating of the heart to rest, and many a heroic man has surrendered to Death before his time.

Let us consider why: let us consider the paralyzing loneliness in which a hero may struggle wearily; let us consider the hero's aching longing to be granted, even just once in small things, to be able to rejoice with the many, to not always be the outsider, whom his different pace and stature tears away from all shared life with others - I believe we scarcely imagine how dreadful it can be to have to be a loner, one who is allowed to take part in nothing of what others do, who realizes in the simplest things that everything is different for him than for those who are allowed to be fellow human beings.
We do not know how much deprivation must be overcome daily for a person to live with the pride of the lonely - whoever lives within the grand context of events can become both the destroyer of everyday life and the one destroyed by it, and must taste daily what it means to not to be a fellow human being; it may even happen to him that, out of the torment of being different, he accuses himself, as if the blame for his isolation lay with him—he who is merely living out his heroic fate.

"Am I not the fugitive? The homeless one?
The inhuman one without purpose or rest,
who, like a waterfall, roared from rock to rock,
eagerly raging toward the abyss."

- Goethe, "Faust"

The heroic nature, which hears the echo of events where others live harmlessly, destroys the hero's ability to live among others, and ultimately makes him so hated where he betrays the pride of the solitary - for those in whose every deed of the day this echo of events resounds, who must always feed only on the most distant, and who renounces all the cheerful happiness of proximity, there come hours when they wish to lay their whole world in ruins and destroy themselves along with it: does it still surprise us when the hero's traits are often marked by the concealment of the horrific?
The wildness of heroic blood must so often yearn for the peace of death; to find, instead of all that hammering will and restless self-consumption, a silence removed from the clamor of events—only the noble experience this longing.
To be like the stars or like the quietly changing year, to be redeemed as an unresistant part of the whole—this loosens the armor that seeks to crush the breast; then must come the gaze into the void, which must be cast by he who cares for the virtue of his people—that insight into the ancestral, viciously defended baseness of all human activity.
Then the Devil perceives the moment and whispers to the hero the word of his conviction, which is so easy to assert and so difficult to doubt:

"What good is all this eternal striving!
To sweep away what has been created into nothingness!
'It is over' - what is there to be read in that?
It is as good as if it had never been,
and yet it goes round in circles as if it were -
I would rather have the eternally empty."

- Goethe, "Faust"

The gaze into the void, the realization that no amount of energy can wrest anything from baseness, often destroys a hero's courage right down to its roots - from this it may happen that his courage no longer makes sense to him, that he, who wishes to be a beginning, stands at an end, and then it is over; then the gates swing open, and a fallen hero is joined by his fathers who dwell in Valhalla.
Whenever life holds no more beginnings, whenever there is room only for anti-heroes and pygmies, whenever a man can no longer stand his ground heroically, then a hero dies - it is better to die heroically than to live on as an anti-hero, for such is the law of the free.
How often is a new beginning in the hero's life a rebirth from a night of death! How often is the hero's laughter the sound meant to chase away the memory of grave silence - while we do not even know from what abyss of nothingness the hero often rises, there are many rebirths, for the nights of death return; the hero must wrest his faith in himself from the Devil's clutches after a bitter struggle, since the mightiest fate is prepared for him; that is why he experiences Death most of all.
He may die if he sees no more heroic life for himself - but he must not give up, for to go on living as one who dampens the courage of his will, as one who remains silent where he should call to battle, as one who plays the sage where he should break out to the left and to the right—that he must not do! To give up on oneself is the original sin of humanity: it is unheroic.
That is why preserving oneself is the very essence of heroic morality - Goethe himself proclaimed it as an ironclad law:

"Just as on the day you were bestowed upon the world,
the sun stood to greet the planets,
so you flourished immediately and ever onward
according to the law by which you set out.

So must you be, for you cannot escape yourself,
as the Sibyls and prophets have said;
and no time, no power can break apart
a formed shape that develops with life."

The defined form of the living, the shaping of itself, is heroic morality, and from it comes the growth of man; he recognizes it as his duty to be true to himself and always the same, and thus his moral day must become a day of purity.
To live in such a way that every action is, as it were, determined by the eternal law of the self, is to live heroically.

Part Two

The Woman and the Heroic Ideal

The customs and morality of the present day make it abundantly clear that we live in an impure age, and we have therefore fallen into uncreative times - we have dissolved everything and have been unable to shape anything from the conditions of our bodies, and thus, we have entered the age that Fichte described as the state of consummate sinfulness: this state of consummate sinfulness is most clearly recognized in the publicly influential woman of this era.

Women usually derive their purpose from men, at least in all masculine, creative eras; in a feminine age such as ours however, the effeminate man increasingly leaves the determination of women's purpose to women themselves, and in doing so, he ultimately leaves to them the determination of the entire spirit of the age.
This is for certain: a true cultural reconstruction—that is, a creative era, a unified yet individual endeavor manifesting itself in state and tradition, in art and science—can only arise from an age that simultaneously assigns to women a strictly defined sphere of their purpose.
It is better for the spirit of man to rule over woman, even at the risk that effeminate men and unrestrained women may complain of injustice, for the all-encompassing work of an age must in each case prove its right to its injustice, even over woman; it is better for a masculine age to create something than for a feminine age, which accomplishes nothing, to presume to stand "justly" above the sexes.

There have been capable women as long as a masculine age spoke and wrote less of human rights and, for the sake of fine capability, imposed them upon women as well.
Women as a group—we are speaking here only of the entire group of women of the time, never of individual, upright, clear-minded women—women as a group were able to attain a certain dignity of being as long as they lived firmly within the boundaries of a class, a social status, and a prevailing moral order, hence the orderly way of life that can still prevail today among women of the peasant and bourgeois classes, or among the officer corps and the nobility; the struggle with the dictates of one's station, and often simply the firm habit of it, create here such clear steadfastness, such hard-hearted coldness, and the now and then such consummate way of life which give such women something of a venerable, almost historical value.
Peasant women, officers' wives, and noblewomen occasionally show us today an example of a way of life in which the modern woman no longer shares; the narrowness of such a way of life is not hidden from us, but the fact that it is, after all, a form of life remains even less hidden - we already suspect it: female morality is possible only within a clearly defined moral life.
The woman of our day would like to be a "lady"; however, she all too easily forgets that, for the health of a nation, being a lady must always be secondary, while being a mother must be primary - as for what it means to be a lady, girls from the lower classes would like to learn this from movie scenes where many fur coats are taken off and put on, and where one even gets the best glimpse into the undergarments of "high society"; moreover, one can also learn that all manner of immorality is part of this refinement.
Girls from the middle class understand a "lady" to be a "distinguished figure" dressed in the "Berlin style" - I myself heard the expression "Berlin style" in a theater in a medium-sized town from a girl sitting behind me who was pointing out a similarly dressed "figure" to her friend.

Indeed: everything that the contemporary, sophisticated world holds in high esteem must be “Berlin-style” - one could call Parisian fashion “Berlin-style” once it has passed through the aesthetic uncertainty of the Berliner, this non-Prussian; the age associates only with “Berlin-style” people.

It is the same with the “lady” as with the “cavalier”: the words are still there, but the concept has long since become a thing of the past.
The cavalier springs from the Nordic spirit; he is the knight who became a courtier, the warrior who became a man of the world, the German who absorbed the spirit of France’s creative ages.
What has remained the same is his sense of honor - Edmund Rostand glorified the spirit of the cavalier one last time in his cheerful and wistful “Cyrano de Bergerac” and truly understood the chivalrous man: his coat of arms must remain pure! Let him lead a wild life, with a laughing spirit, full of exuberance; let him love women, fight with men—his shield remains pure!
The cavalier was the last colorful manifestation of the heroic spirit in a social class; however, the French Revolution has also wiped his colors from the face of the earth.
The lady was the counterpart to the cavalier; she was not merely an invention of Christian-Germanic stupidity, as Schopenhauer believes, but was an attempt by the chivalrous spirit to create woman as a species into the shining image for which one conquers the world; she was the attempt of a spirit that was at once knowledgeable and ardent with love, that was experienced enough to know the limits of womanhood, yet chivalrous enough—and above all, chivalrous—to desire woman as a lady - thus, for the sake of the ardent lover, woman created herself as a lady, and through the law of chivalry and the firm boundaries of masculine law, she also took upon herself the grace that was sung of.
The era of the French Revolution also extinguished the charm of this ideal - it has been very well observed that the Revolution was never concerned with making all people socially acceptable, for that would have been a noble intention; in its malice, the Revolution preferred to destroy the salon itself, and thus, it also drove out the gentleman and the lady, rendering the salon unrecognizable with the filth of the street.

The 19th century made the cultivation of a clear feminine way of life entirely impossible, for the publicly influential woman of our time is everything: knowledgeable, adept at all the myriad practices of modern life, at home in every profession, a Reichstag voter and representative, a university professor and artist—she has learned to present herself in a thoroughly Berlin manner, that is, without grace; she has learned to mock old-fashioned feminine virtues, laugh at “prejudices,” break out of all bourgeois constraints with unrestrained, unseemly gestures, and has reached the point where one no longer knows whether she might be offended if one still wishes to treat her as a lady at all, since she emphasizes through her entire demeanor the emancipated woman, that is, the unbound one.
She is the unbound, the unfettered, and her irregular movements already betray it: men let her rage, chatter at gatherings, rant in the Reichstag, and strut about in universities—it is revolting!
But the sight corresponds to the “freedom” of our age - Goethe himself foresaw the time when we would “subject everything to a confused arbitrariness that we call freedom.”

There is one more thing that is effeminate about this age: the great importance attached to all matters of sex.
One could amass libraries of immense proportions if one were to collect the “erotic literature” of the present day, and a true bibliophile would need a large room for his personal library.

There are people who devote all their time to every new depiction of sexual matters - just look at the plays, film dramas, novels, and images that are popular; they are the endless—and to the discerning mind, endlessly tedious—repetitions of often-repeated compilations from sexual life.
For the thousandth time they are shown: adultery, the man between two or more women, the woman between two or more men, the lustful woman, the "great," "dazzling" harlot, the "irresistible, amoral" woman - we are sick of them, of all these things that—I don't know who—once so aptly called "glass beads for spiritual Negroes"; it is all filth piled up from rotting shells of experience.

Truly, for the heroic man of our time, in many environments, only the life of the Jomsvikings remains—those who abstained entirely from sex because they did not want to become effeminate; it is a glorious thing to possess the healthy strength of the senses—the Jomsvikings knew this well—but it is the most glorious thing of all to fill the world with deeds that intervene in the course of events.
German youths often wonder whether there could be anything higher for a woman than love for the hero and the hero's love; however, once they have become men, many have learned that the modern woman of today prefers another: the dandy, the effeminate one, who understands ambiguity and the mood of excuses, of half-obscured things.
The effeminate man appeals most to the woman of this age—that well-dressed one who arrives so quietly and departs so discreetly, who can greet so politely in public and speak so lustfully in private; he is the man of practiced tenderness, and also of calculated brutality—all in due time: he is the smooth operator, as all cowards and scoundrels are - the woman of our time desires him.
There is yet another type of modern woman, the repulsive one, who even imagines herself free from men—she has lost the last vestige of feminine charm.
She walks through lecture halls to earn a doctorate, sweeps through party offices, attends board meetings, is even elected chairwoman and sent to the Reichstag - we know this type all too well, and we prefer to remain silent about it.

There are many variations—yet the dignity of woman is rarely to be found: the woman of our time says this is the man's fault, as she rarely has the right to speak thus - yes, this is true, for until the man has remade himself and the times into a man again, the woman, too, will not find her new dignity.
This will not happen without much outcry about "injustice"—more often from the side of the "liberated" woman than from the side of those who have let go; formation is impossible anywhere without a constraint that is good and must be self-imposed—herein also lies the value of marriage.
The formation of a heroic character will not be possible without firm guidance of women; it should not come from men as a constraint, but all the better if it comes from women themselves as self-formation.
Let women go to universities in peace, and let us not take it seriously, for that is the surest way for it to lose its appeal; let women announce lectures as university professors, but keep men away from them, for even if you could gain a hundred times more knowledge from her than from a male teacher, you must recognize that manhood is more than knowledge - only when men's self-respect is restored will women's dignity be restored in turn.
Incidentally, let this also be noted here: in our universities, the transmission of knowledge is the rule, while the acquisition of productive knowledge is the exception; if it were the other way around, the superficiality of female students and the misdeeds of female university professors would immediately become apparent - this is not to say anything against the suitability of certain women for scholarly professions, since at most, the relevant questions are merely hinted at here; since we are dealing with

female education, a sufficient consideration of these matters would require addressing questions of hereditary health, morals, and taste, the answers to which would lead far beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Grant women the right to vote as well—the entire system of popular representation is, after all, obsolete—grant them the doctoral degree, the title of representative, and pay it no mind; it will be of no use to them, for it is part of a woman's charm that she fundamentally relates so much only to men - if she casts that aside as well and makes herself "completely free," then you will find, in women's clothing, a charmless being to whom the world is almost nothing but a nuisance, and who herself serves only as a nuisance.

Only within the male-established laws of courtly life and only from such social circles does the princess's line in Goethe's "Tasso" apply:

"Man strives for freedom, woman for propriety."

In the primordial conflict of sexual life throughout the ages—even if, on the surface, it may appear a hundred times different—it has always been the case that form emanated from the spirit of the experienced man, while dissolution emanated from the spirit of the degenerate woman - as Goethe once wrote:

"All laws are made by the old and by men; the young and women want the exception, while the old want the law."

In all these matters, however, we must bear in mind again and again that a man may very well have succumbed to a feminine spirit, and a woman may very well belong to the masculine spirit of creation - only in this way does the present become clear to us—a present that has indeed produced men and women, but has for the most part deformed both into a feminine spirit.

A heroic man and one of the most masculine men of all time, akin to our Schiller and Fichte, the Englishman Milton, once formulated the heroic law of the sexes from his stern, Nordic spirit as follows:

"He alone for God, and she for God in him."

One would like to further unfold this saying in its full meaning as a fundamental law of heroic life - yet, amidst all the mockery of our days, the time for a feminine morality still seems far off.

"He alone for God"—that is: living a life of competence and confidence, shaping his faith, knowledge, and will—this is, to the woman of the present, the unadorned, the unvarnished, a life without flirtation, lies, or concealment.

"She for God in him"—that is, a woman's life taking delight in a man's struggle, participating in his workday, celebrating his festive times, taking pride in being this man's companion and sharing in his journeys, possessing his senses, being the refuge of his soul—that would be the meaning of this heroic phrase.

In such a form, marriage would truly be "the beginning and the summit of all culture," as Goethe wished to see it - will such a beginning and summit come to pass; will a future generation once again mature into the freedom and customs that Tacitus observed among our Nordic ancestors, men and women alike?

It will be up to the man to choose first, for if he decides to shape a new way of life, he has thereby decided for the woman as well.
The woman demands decisiveness and purpose from the man: let him provide them! Once he has forged his soul so that it has become strong, then he will be able to determine the woman's destiny.
Now he allows himself to be dragged down by an effeminate age: let him reflect on his manhood! He is called upon to shape things, not to allow the decay of all things that the age desires; he must measure the blueprint of a moral structure at right angles and define it with certainty, and once he does so, the woman will thank him for it; the liveliest grace will be bestowed upon him.

The problem with the arguments just presented is that they deal only with the woman in question, the one who publicly sets the tone for the age, and that is not the woman one must wish upon a people for its healing.
Since the discussion had to dwell on the contemporary image of woman, it is bound to appear negative; it may therefore be necessary to state clearly once more that, in all that has been said, the premise remains that there are women of a dignified and capable nature living among us whom a condemnatory judgment cannot touch: peasant women, women of the bourgeoisie, and women of the nobility live among us in a state of existence so clearly defined by their surroundings that the modern man would have to stand in shame, had scorn not taken the place of reverence in him.
Here, too, what was said in the context of that Low German folk song applies: it was precisely during the World War that we experienced the heroism of women in a magnificent way, to the point that the power of fate in song could not surpass what was experienced by women among us - but the direction of the spirit of the times did not and does not point toward such a view of fate, and in all these reflections, the direction of our time is to be grasped.
One might perhaps defend the claim that women, like human beings in general, have been more or less the same at all times - even if it were conceded that, measured by visible actions and obvious behavior, human beings have always remained the same, the direction of the willpower of a generation would still remain to be judged in every age; this direction, the spirit of our age, has, however, given rise to the negative remarks.

But the problem of the prevailing conditions extends even further, and the appearance of a merely negative perspective extends even further still; this may be due to a peculiar social phenomenon of our time, for two things stand out when one judges the conditions of contemporary women's lives - the first is that, from the moral world of our fathers—though narrow in scope for us, yet clearly defined—the dignified, capable woman emerges into our time, serving as an example of what was once called a way of life; the second is that, standing in stark and scornful contrast to this image is the counter-image of the uninhibited woman, as outlined above; it may lie in the nature of women that these two types of female life must emerge in a time such as ours.
The situation is different for men, for far more rarely do manifestations of a masculine way of life extend from that world of narrowly defined yet clearly structured moral concepts - entire generations of men in the 19th century set about the dissolution of the old ideals with a perverse kind of dogged consistency; in contrast, however, a new generation of men in our time has once again arrived at the ideal—or at least at an understanding and a desire for a clear definition of the male essence—a generation from which something may yet emerge.

The unrestrained, however, has not yet been pushed back by a creative impulse of the age, for the drive is lacking; otherwise, the epitome of female morality, like the epitome of male morality, would stand clearly defined before us - it is this ideal that we seek, and in the face of this task, it matters not whether a conflict arises between those who, to their joyful certainty in daily experience, have encountered more women of a dignified sort, and those who, to their disgust in daily experience, have encountered more of the "unrestrained."
If the remarks set forth above appear negative, then it is up to women to live in such a way that we come to affirm them, for we measure the German woman against the timeless epitome of womanhood of Nordic blood; such a standard, however, entails high demands, in the face of which the contemporary environment is pitiful and often horrifying.
We reject this present state of affairs precisely because we trust the German woman with a sense of self-worth and a will to pure experience, which are to contribute to the civilization that must come.

v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff writes in his book "Plato" (1919) at one point:

"It was the Germanic peoples who first granted women their rights and dignity as women; if she now wishes to become a man, she will take both away from herself."

The path of the Germanic woman lies in the spiritual realm; through her dignity, she commands more respect than the emancipated woman does through her legal claims.
The path of the emancipated woman lies in the process, in all these associations, votes, programs, paragraphs, and resolutions, the use of which has already made men look so ridiculous - thus, she is now taking the wrong path that the liberal man paved in the 19th century: it is a painful sight.
The path of the Germanic woman will be her own path, for manhood and womanhood are two equal and incomparable forms, and the more feminine the woman, the more masculine the man, the healthier a people will be.
All the "rights" of women remain mere procedures, and will never create a new dignity for women, because dignity is something of the soul and not an institution: only from a new dignity will a new grace come to women.

The nature of the Germanic woman is created for the most vibrant grace; even the sculptures that late Rome has left us of the Germanic woman bear witness to this - how nobly formed is that Herculanean woman standing in Dresden; how much more than nobly formed is that Thusnelda standing in Florence! Through the Roman style, she shows us what her sculptor drew from her very being, and precisely through this, she shows us how the true nature of the Germanic woman asserts itself against the sculptor's foreign style, revealing already the vast possibilities and all the traits that the German man seeks to find in a woman, so that, like his ancestors in Tacitus's time, he may honor in her the "sacred and prophetic" that moves him.
Only the Germanic woman is endowed with a charm and grace capable of moving a man so deeply that, transcending all desire that might seize him, he becomes a beholder; the Germanic man, if he has not allowed anything to be robbed from the fullness of his being, cannot help but believe in the "sacred and prescient" in woman, for it belongs to him as the timeless embodiment of the woman born to him.
It is a peculiarity of the Germanic nature that the questions of man and woman are far from resolved, and all their spiritual bonds are far from being perceived when only the sexual aspect has been considered;

this speaks volumes of joy regarding the Germanic woman, and this is the interpretation of that inexpressibly promising quality which the German man conceals when he has experienced within himself the essence of woman—given to him as an ideal—somewhere in the form and gaze of a German woman. When the German male and female natures, when both are embraced by a way of life faithful to the race—and for us that means Nordic—then a German way of life, this most necessary work, will arise for us.

The Nature of Manners

Only within a well-established culture can women find their way back to a clear way of life - but we lack the drive to create a culture—or, to put it more simply: to create a sense of civility.

It is not true that we possess a high culture or a high sense of civility - here we must learn to distinguish carefully: there are certainly many individuals today of high civility, that is, in this case, of a clear way of life and deep education; Germany perhaps possessed more of them than any other country. However, these highly educated people, recognizable by their knowledge and self-education, are not the so-called leading figures of the present; they are not pictured in any magazine, but are instead the silent ones, and often those silenced.
Secondly: the civility of a people is not equivalent to the sum of the educated people it produces; that is the real mistake in all considerations of the nature of civility.

By the culture of a people, I mean the stock of education, of self-education, and conviction that is common to all members of the people; if one then examines the cultures of our Western world closely, it will become apparent that many a tribe in Asia or Africa possesses a higher culture than the Western peoples - thus, it becomes evident that the civilization of our pagan ancestors, as described by Tacitus and as it reappears centuries later in the Icelandic sagas, was so highly developed that we should be left speechless by it.
When one views things in this light—and one cannot view the question of a people's civilization in any other way—the intellectual crudeness of liberalism becomes apparent, which extols the questionable achievements of the repulsive political life of our states to all peoples as a model to be emulated, and fails to notice how much higher the civilizations of many peoples stand above our own conditions, which tower far above us in the unity and purity of their national consciousness - how clueless and devoid of true divine spirit, for example, despite all its well-meaning zeal, the Christian-European conversion of the pagans is before the upright character of a so-called pagan folk culture.
How much purity of custom is thus destroyed anew time and again - one may hear explorers of distant lands speak of how the so-called converts are uprooted and degenerate into outcasts.

We must recognize this and learn to humbly perceive in it a divine order of events: every culture of a particular time or a particular people is built upon a foundation of convictions that are certain and sacred to every member of that people; every culture arises from what one might call a universal yet individual striving, arises from a faith to which all and each feel bound in pride and confidence.
The Song of Hildebrand, the Song of the Nibelungs, the Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals, and finally the entire, mighty culture of the Middle Ages—custom, faith, art, science, state, and the individual—all were the expression of a great cultural unity, of a single, all-encompassing aspiration, the very symbol of which is the Gothic cathedral itself.
The Frenchman Gustave Le Bon has presented to us in his books "The Psychology of Crowds" and "The Psychological Laws of the Evolution of Crowds" (both of which have been translated into German[12]) a clear understanding of this law of national development: only the all-encompassing faith, the binding certainty to which a time and a people raise and strengthen every individual member of society, creates a

[12] And English. - The Translator

civilization, for only such a spirit creates nations out of natives or populations; in contrast, the dissolution of a way of life has time and again reduced nations to masses and, time and again, through so-called "enlightenment", eroded the universal individual striving until a manly nation has become an effeminate mass.
A way of life is a form of conduct perceived as a duty by every member of the nation - Le Bon calls his own people, the French, effeminate and prone to mass formation, and he praises the Anglo-Saxons, who understood how to awaken the individual striving in even the humblest member of the people—thus, he says, Anglo-Saxon competence and world domination were created.
It is up to us to recognize that there is no reason whatsoever to praise and extol German culture: it is certainly true that the great creators of the German people stand unrivaled and unattainable, indeed, even more so, that only the German spirit made the great deeds of the mind possible, and that only the German spirit may make them possible again - but it is equally certain that we Germans have never known how to create a firmly binding social order.

Here we can learn and learn again from the Anglo-Saxons of the creative ages—less so from the Anglo-Saxons of the present.
The Englishman of old succeeded in creating a culture based on three ideals: common sense, fairness, and gentlemanliness—sound judgment, integrity, and noble character; all three are ideals that, while sharing in the highest values established by the great men of the German spirit, are not themselves those highest values as seen by a Leibniz, a Goethe, or a Kant.
But this is the unconscious yet excellent insight of the experienced English mind: that in order to educate an entire people toward a unified, individual striving, one must create middle ideals of competence; to educate the inhabitants of a country into a people, one must create for them the national idea, the binding belief to which all wish to profess themselves joyfully and proudly, the middle ideal that makes one capable - even if the individual of high aspiration within the people grows beyond such a middle concept, he must first fulfill it, he must take root in it if he wishes to grow higher.
This is the exemplary value of the English national idea, this all-individual obligation to live as a true Englishman in order to be held in high esteem by one's peers; that is why Bismarck, too, repeatedly felt a fondness for the English character:

> *"As far as foreign countries are concerned, I have in my life had sympathy only for England and its inhabitants, and even now I am not entirely free of it - but the people do not want to let us love them."*

That today's England is already in a state of deep decay and dissolution shall be left aside here—the "value of growth," as I shall call it, the value of growth inherent in such a wholly individual national spirit has been visibly confirmed in English history.
Even more than that: with its highest embodiment in that of the gentleman, the Englishman had boldly understood how to participate in the idea of the heroic.

The German easily sees the narrowness in this embodiment, and has allowed English mockers to tell him that one needs only money and impeccable clothing to be considered a gentleman - certainly, some reservations are justified of course: self-control would not have been a high value for Beethoven, as seen during periods of creative work when he was once arrested as a vagrant because of his clothing, or when he would also occasionally spit into his mirror.

Measured gestures and moderate speech are not lofty moral goals, but they are nonetheless significantly educational for the average person and, as the epitome of an entire people, of incalculable value; however, the epitome of the gentleman contains more: it contains the obligation to think and act nobly, to be chivalrous, and always manly and bold.
It is certainly also the nature and goal of the true German to be noble, and many people of noble character live among us - but the Englishman of the creative ages had understood how to present noble character to his entire people as the highest goal, to awaken a singular striving toward it, and that is the decisive factor and the value of growth that matters; that is why the nobleman Bismarck held the Anglo-Saxons—and only them—in such high regard among foreigners, even though as a German statesman he had to oppose Anglo-Saxon intentions ten times over.
The fact that the healthy aspiration of the Englishman no longer endures in this way today, that even by English standards the gentleman is dying out, need not be considered here, for the model remains: the creation of a binding national ethos.
We, meanwhile, have never managed to achieve this ethos - since the character of a people consists solely of the collective body of shared convictions, it is our task to create this body, and while we have enough educated, highly educated, learned, and wise people among us, we do not heed them: let us finally create our national spirit!

It is a task for which we require the strength of more than one generation, for we are more fractured than any other people on earth, and most deeply so where other peoples find their greatest strength: in their creed - while we cannot discuss here the question of individual churches and creeds, the Nordic spirit of this book shows where it seeks a path to salvation, and in the course of the book, in its final sections, its direction will be explained.
Here, let us merely point out once more that we Germans, with our unfortunate penchant for so-called "worldly ideas" and for a lame objectivity, will not get very far even in matters of faith - we laugh at the "Polish Mother of God" to whom the Pole prays: he wants to know no other, and his faith has held his national identity together - here, too, what has been said about the middle concepts applies—they alone create a national identity and, to speak in Darwinian terms, make it viable in the struggle for existence (survival of the fittest).
Nor must faith in God seek to penetrate the mind and conscience from above: it too must spring forth from landscape and tribal character, from language and custom, as it were from the very soil of a people; it too must absorb the growth value of the middle concepts and always prefer to be a little too earthly-fine rather than too otherworldly - a "Mother of God" who is supposed to have one face for Poles, another for Indians, and yet another for Chinese is an absurdity even for piety, for piety is the permeation of all things in the environment with reverence and faith.
The Polish Mother of God is a constant presence for the Pole, capable of speaking from the fields, the forests, and every tool of the Polish people - faith in God aims simultaneously at the most particular and the most universal, and seeks to unite the nearest and the farthest; it is, however, human nature to start from the particular and the nearest.
So it is with our Christian faith as well - it has not yet understood how to draw its strength from the soil of the German people, and that is why its fruits are only half-ripe: only when we complete, in an active spirit, the work that German mysticism—as embodied by Eckhart and Tauler—began in an overly contemplative spirit; only when the struggle that Luther, as a statesman and man of action, waged against Rome—which was alien to the people—has been fought to the end—only then will the German national

idea have found its core; this does not require many historical works on Germanic culture and Christianity, nor much mutual animosity, but requires only the “freedom of a Christian,” who is master of all things, and master also of the doctrines that have come to us from the degenerate late period of the Mediterranean peoples, from a decay of nations - all that is needed is the courage to step back to the beginning.

And yet, we do not dare to step back to the beginning - we are weary of spirit, heavily burdened by history, and too disheartened to gaze upon a new dawn; despite being descended from heroic blood, and despite speaking the language that a heroic people created for itself, it is to be feared that only the words remain: the creative power, meanwhile, is lacking!

The German Language: The Language of the People, The Language of Heroes

Creative power is lacking, and nowhere is our weakness more evident than in language itself, which was still full of vitality among our ancestral people.

If one wishes to experience the abundant richness of linguistic power, one must have explored the languages of our forefathers; if one wishes to know what it means to live with a heroic spirit, to stand at the beginning, full of creative power, one must be well-versed in the structure of our languages.
They have been called the Indo-European languages: they are the languages of tribes of Nordic blood, who have always brought their languages and customs to foreign peoples from the north to the south and east, all the way into Asia.
While most of these languages still live on—the Indo-European ones— the Nordic blood of the tribes that brought them may for the most part have long since dried up.

We shall speak later of the Nordic race itself and its tribes - here, let us consider the creation of these languages:
They are called the Indo-European languages and occupy a unique place among the languages of the earth - suffice it to say here that in their early days, they endowed the verb with a power of its own, unlike any found in other languages.
One must perhaps have dabbled in languages of a different kind, such as the so-called agglutinative languages, to recognize what a feat of the spirit the creation of the verb represents, as our languages know it - from this springs the bold reach into the world, the joy of action and will, the delight in the assault that a heroic people feels at the dawn of all creation; it is a ridiculous endeavor of our scientific age to imagine the creators of our languages as semi-animalic primitive humans, for the creation of these languages must have required a far bolder spirit than is characteristic of an age such as ours.
What a wealth of languages these peoples have created and repeatedly developed into the most powerful expressions of their own character: among the languages they created, those that conceived the deepest thoughts—the Indian, the Greek, and the German—were the languages in which, perhaps, only primal creative thought was possible; the heroic spirit, the most vibrant on earth, had to be the deepest as well, and that spirit gave birth to the Vedas, Plato, Leibniz, and Kant.

“Whoever has thought the deepest loves the most vibrant.”

People of the present day would be incapable of creating even a fragment of such linguistic creation.

When one explores the Germanic languages, one stands in awe of this creative power, this luminous power of vision, and this imaginative power of a comprehensive gaze; these Nordic languages have lived in abundance, beauty, and plasticity—each word blossoming, as it were, in the arrangement of the sentence, each sound born of a heroic delight in resonance, a youthfully fresh stride in masculine strength, whose deep creative joy we, weary in spirit, can scarcely imagine today.
We still speak the words, yet the power of imagery is missing, the radiance of the words is missing, the solid structure is missing - all this is because we lack creative power, the masculine spirit.
How ashamed we stand before Luther’s language! We have lost the passion and breath of the word; we no longer hear, and therefore nothing resonates with us; we no longer see, and therefore nothing shines for

us; we “exchange words” like money and goods, thinking not of their sound, nor of the image within them, and we speak them casually, though they walked with restraint in our fathers’ time.
We know not what we do when we speak German - German, that is, the language that today perhaps alone still makes creation possible, for it is heroically created, and thus, the will within it is heroic.

French is called an analytical language, that is, a language that dissects; German is called synthetic, summarizing, bringing things together, and this should mean more to us than a mere observation: it should lead to a deepening of our Germanness.
It should teach us what kind of poetry—and why such poetry, a poetry of the synthesizing gaze—must emerge from the German language if it is to be true poetry - in the spirit of the French language lies what the Norman Flaubert achieved: the single most fitting word (“le mot propre”); this necessary word in the necessary place, as it were in its geometric position, is like a concept from analytical geometry, born of a sharp and subtle mind of dissecting observation, from the French spirit of creative times, hence the perfection of “Madame Bovary,” which towers on the high path of the French linguistic spirit.
The German word is different: in true creation, it does not arise from a dissection, but from the imaginative power of an eye that sees as a whole; hence there is no single, precise word in German, but rather something like a single, meaning-weaving image.
The German word is, as it were, a stone to the observing German, which he throws into the sea of creation for the sake of the wide circles of waves—he throws it to the necessary place, but he intends to unleash the meaning-generating waves with it.
The German word is less a geometric point than a pointing finger, a hint, a letting-see, an open gate - Goethe once spoke of how the Latin language pins everything down, and the German language is its opposite in this respect, in that it would rather remain silent than speak to the end.
It aims for a lingering resonance, not for pinning things down - Goethe understood it.

The German is only worthy of his language if he can create; the German language wants to be a language of creation, of formation: one can soon speak Italian as a joy, French as a pleasure, English as an expression of confident energy, but one either speaks German abominably and without power, simply as a means of communication, as the German of this era does, or one speaks it out of a sense for the creative power of the German language, for its sound, its imagery, and out of a spirit of responsibility; then one speaks well and in a manner worthy of the German language.
One can soon speak many languages adequately; German, however, can only be spoken very poorly or creatively, for the unifying spirit of the German language is the spirit of creation.

How the 19th century, this age of the press and freedom of the press, has treated the language! If we were to reuse expressions from this book here, we could say: the 19th century has turned the German language, which was the language of a people of destiny, into the language of people with many methods - thus, the German language has degenerated into a mere means of communication.
What Goethe foresaw has truly come to pass in the course of the 19th century:

“With freedom of the press, one no longer feels like writing.”

One no longer writes because reading newspapers has become the standard for reading; haste, irresponsibility, a lack of ear for the rhythm and sound of words, half-thoughts, skewed perspectives—this is the common spirit of newspapers and newspaper readers, as well as books and book readers.
The testimonies of Old Germanic poetry confirm to us how slowly and powerfully our forefathers must have spoken—today the farmer still teaches us this—and how deeply considered the word stands in the sentence; only those who, listening intently, can still find the sound of the Nordic character in the resonance of the individual German word, only they know their German, and only they should be heard.
To hear the sound of such linguistic artistry here, let Ernst Moritz Arndt speak to us of the German language:

"We have experienced enough of the unfortunate fruits that the neglect and contempt of our glorious mother tongue have borne us - whoever does not respect and love his language cannot love his people either; whoever does not understand his language does not understand his people either, and can never feel what true German virtue and glory are, for in the depths of language lie all the veiled inner understanding and all the most distinctive characteristics of the people.
Therefore, German men, speak German, and speak it well and authentically, and through a quiet, spiritual transformation that takes place within you of its own accord, you will very soon be quite different men than you are now."

Arndt recognized this: one cannot speak German, speak German well, without thereby shaping oneself - that is the splendor of Germanness.
That is also its danger and doom in the world: that being German is not something given, nor really anything innate, but always something chosen—we shall see this clearly later.

Any language can be treated by natives and foreigners alike as a means of communication, but German is thereby devalued the most; any language can be spoken well by natives and foreigners alike, but in the case of the German language, this requires creative courage.
The German language has been called a primary or original language, and Fichte glorified it as such in his "Addresses to the German Nation," assigning us the task of becoming the original people of this original language once more, thereby returning to our beginning.
The language of the German people has been called the "original language" because it has remained the same among its faithful speakers today as it was in ancient times: the Gauls and Franks, who lived west of the German settlements, abandoned their own languages, adopted the Roman language—Latin—and transformed it until it became the French language; they have fashioned the French language into a polished weapon of the mind, which must be loved by anyone who loves the duel, but it is no longer a primal language: the spirit is dead.
In German, I can see vividly, meaningfully, and clearly what, for example, "Rück-sicht" (consideration), "Ein-sicht" (insight), "Vor-sicht" (foresight), "Vor-bild" (role model), "Sinn-bild" (symbol), "Be-griff" (concept), "er-fahren" (experience), "er-leben", (live through), "Ver-mehr-en" (multiply), "ver-wirk-lich-en" (realize), "zer-gliedern" (dissect), "zer-knirscht" (dissolve), "ursprünglich" (original), "entwickeln" (develop) means - meanwhile, corresponding French words sound hollow even to native speakers: the word stems are dead, the language no longer nurtures anything green - it is no longer a primal language.

A word like “erleben” in particular gives us a glimpse into the unifying power of our language; it is untranslatable in its fullness, and “Erlebnis” would have to be translated with words like “event,” “adventure,” “occurrence,” and the like - thus, the translation gets stuck in external relationships, and is unable to express the comprehensive content of an event that simultaneously became a spiritual enrichment—this is the case when translating into French, and likewise when translating into English.
In English, things are only slightly different than in French - English has lost most of its Germanic vocabulary—that is, the vocabulary through which it can feel, see, taste, and smell—and has adopted a Romance vocabulary in its place, one that produces empty sounds, mere linguistic bellows, no linguistic life, lame in communication, yet devoid of primal feeling.
In Shakespeare’s “King Lear,” Kent offers his services to the king and says to him:

Kent: *“...you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.”*
King Lear: *“What's that?”*
Kent: *“Authority.”*

In English, the word for this is “authority”—a combination of four syllables that have no counterpart in the mind, nothing that could correspond to the word “Hoheit” (majesty).
One should compare the magnificent words of Portia in “The Merchant of Venice,” which must be felt to the core and begin thus:

“The nature of mercy knows no compulsion.”

with the English

“The quality of mercy is not strain’d.”

Once again, the original language stands against the bastard language.
The evocative power of English has died out; it is no longer an original language - German, meanwhile, has remained a mother tongue, thanks to the individual Germans who fought for its purity and thanks to the individual creators who have grasped its spirit.
It is up to us to preserve it: let the future generation have the new pride and the new creation.

Whoever truly senses what the German language is knows that the task it sets before us is glorious: he makes up his mind and does his part.
Reflection on the essence of the German language must also give poetry the insight that it is of a synthesizing spirit, just as the German language is of a synthesizing spirit - it is not enough to describe the scattered world around us with scattered words and sentences, as naturalism and impressionism have done in poetry—that is, to say that priests are priests, weaklings are weaklings, and harlots are harlots, or at best, that all the wealthy are scoundrels and all the poor are beautiful souls - why the waste of printing costs? The monthly journals of forensic medicine or neurology and the like have always offered me more than all modern writing with its depictions of today’s human stock: there I found the observations more genuine than in the writings of the authors of this era.
It is of no use to say how people of today feel, how listless the bon vivants are and those who furnish the hollows of their souls, nor is anything achieved by repeatedly extolling the realistic people of our time in

novels, or by describing in poems feelings that are always only those of the era—the scattered, foolish, brazen, insolent, or the repulsive, meaningless, or even the so-called passion-torn feelings of the age - all of this achieves nothing; all of this merely states that people and things can be one way or another, and said in such words in which the creative spirit of our German language has no part, because they do not spring from the spirit of powerful synthesis, and because the contemporary writers of our day cannot draw from the deep stream of language, but, like the impure, splash about in the murkiest of shallow places. Pure vision is lacking, as is the power of creation that must make even the most fleeting word and meaning endure:

"If the poet's pure hand draws,
water will gather."

- Goethe

The artistic sensibility of the age has always been one of dissolution, and a churning in the dregs of all decay—so in poetry, so in music, so in the visual arts; we must linger a little longer on the latter as an example of a contemporary artistic sensibility.

Heroic Art

Was all of 19th-century art anything other than the progression of decay?
Viewed from a distance, one might perhaps say that the creative, constructive power of the Western world lasted until the French Revolution, and with it the age in which heroism, in step with its time, was possible - this will become clearest to us in the section on the art of statecraft.
In the visual arts, one could draw the line after the Romantics, after a Caspar David Friedrich (bordering on Leibl and Menzel); in music, perhaps after Schubert and Weber (bordering on Wagner), and in poetry, after Kleist, Hölderlin, Novalis, and Eichendorff (bordering on Hebbel); architecture, which is perhaps the decisive hallmark of creative eras, had already died in the Rococo, still in the sweetness of existence of which Talleyrand spoke and which still resonates for us in Mozart - at that time, something died in the world.
Just as in art, so too in philosophy one could draw the line after Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel (bordering on Schopenhauer) - all these thinkers may well have erred, but they erred greatly, erred out of creative impulse, and it is the creative alone that matters; in the bustling division of labor of the modern philosophical "swarm of ants," the joy and power of thought have been stifled.
I am well aware that creative individuals have emerged even after the turning point I have indicated, but they have mostly felt themselves to be in a more or less passionate opposition to their time— such as Bismarck, Wagner, Leibl, Hebbel, Gotthelf, and the German van Gogh, or, their creative power never amounted to a pure and honest reshaping of the great heritage of the ages, as was the case with Storm and Keller, with Brahms, and with men like Feuerbach or Böcklin.
From a distant perspective, one can say that since the time of Frederick the Great and Kant—since the time of our classical and romantic thinkers and artists—no man has emerged among our contemporaries who stood at the very beginning; only Bismarck was a true hero, akin to the sea, the mountains, the storm, and the oak tree, and it is precisely from his mighty existence that we gauge the measure that should serve to show us how barren this 19th century stands, devoid of great creators, not just here among us, but throughout the entire Western world.

The 19th century—and all the authentic currents of the 19th century—have been dissolving - let us consider the visual arts as an example:
The 19th century particularly cultivated Impressionism, that is, an artistic sensibility corresponding roughly to materialism - Impressionism, akin to the disintegrating spirit of the French, has produced works of art that are authentically national in the Romance-speaking world, but never in Germany, for the German spirit is either constructive or nothing at all; that is why it has the hardest time in the world, for construction has always been foreign to German Impressionism.
It is characteristic of Impressionism in all art forms that it seeks to present things as they appear before it: "What hovers in a fluctuating appearance" is to be rendered in a fluctuating appearance; what the eye has taken in, gliding from hue to hue, is to be found again in the artwork.
The world, as it presents itself as a colorful phenomenon, should reappear in the painting with the same immediate freshness—no more and no less—and indeed, no more; it is certainly not some thought of the painter about the world, for that would already be a misfortune.
The artist was to be a reporter of what was seen—so it was demanded in an era whose worldview was then called Positivism; this gave rise to an art that, among the French—the positivist French, with their traditional restraint and their certainty of taste—was often merely an expression of their lack of

intellectual boldness and no particular merit - this art produced works of a masterful nature, for positivism corresponds to the French spirit.
The same artistic movement has, from time to time, also produced paintings of a cohesive visual impact in Germany, but on the whole, only paintings that may be listed in price catalogs and, ultimately, in art histories, but will not count as part of the heritage of the German spirit - it is a law of the German spirit, and Goethe expressed it thus:

"What hovers in a wavering appearance, anchor it with enduring thoughts!"

Just as materialism, and the intellectually far poorer monism, sought to elevate the method, the procedure of the natural sciences, to a worldview, so Impressionism sought to elevate a method, a procedure of approach, to an artistic worldview, to the artistic worldview itself - in both cases, a deep reflection on the essence of the creative in the human spirit was lacking, and the power to anchor what was seen into enduring thoughts was missing.
In a certain sense, one could say that Rembrandt was the greatest Impressionist, but the difference remains this: for Rembrandt, Impressionism was a kind of refined seeing and shaping that had to serve his work, but never an expression of a refined sensibility - Rembrandt was the creative spirit whom his impassioned heart compelled to paint, and of the world, as it floats in shifting appearances, he has proclaimed moving truths in quiet love; for this man of sorrow however, the form itself is still the material, and appearance is to him like a veil over the powers of fate - thus, before the simplest sketch of a landscape, we sense how much pain and bliss, how many downpours and darkness this lonely man has kept hidden.

The power of the soul alone creates the great works of art, which are enduring thoughts - on the battlefield that stretches along the boundaries between man and the world, the great works are beheld; it does not depend on the shifting appearance, nor does it depend on who views it "more impartially"—for all these things are akin to the idle speculation about appearances that the prisoners in the cave engage in in Plato's allegory—what matters is solely the creator's gaze upon the appearance and the power of the mind that forges the work from this shifting appearance, and from the inner sense of a mighty destiny: the power of the mind that wages its heavy struggle on the battlefield between itself within and the worldly appearance without.
The matters of cognition and creation are, at their core, all simple to the simple-minded - whoever has ears to hear may discern them from Plato's theory of ideas and from Kant's critique of cognition, thereby shaping them into their own fruitfulness; only must the creator first be simple, and then he may learn to see the simple.
The dissolution of the wavering appearance into patches of color ultimately degenerates into technical skill and artifice, and ends with us Germans, as it must, in a Berlin-style brashness of brushwork, which may delight those who, as modernists, see in painting a mere technique; in contrast, those who seek the shaping of a destiny will in solemnity turn away.

Impressionism has ended and made way for another hint of decay: we have experienced Expressionism, which asserts to us that behind its foreign term lies the idea that one should no longer dabble with appearances; that the new style of art has been discovered, and that one should come and marvel and buy - the drum rattles deafeningly.

It is said, however, that the wise had foreseen this since the time of Symbolism and the rush around El Greco, and had experienced Expressionism just as Mephisto experienced the student:

"This time he is of the newest sort: he will terrify without limit."

Expressionism, in a simple yet always astonishing process for the masses, has turned the whole thing upside down in a flash; it has simply taken the end that Impressionism had grasped at one end and seized it at the other, now believing it had grasped it all, and even spoke of a beginning of all art through it - in truth, however, Expressionism—to which, through no merit of its own, a few valid things have also fallen under its advertising clamour—is the end, the complete dissolution, a purely metropolitan art of painted mental decay, and an art stemming from the same spirit that has here and there found its way into the teachings of the natives' dance.

Expressionism is truly of its time and, as it were, in the right place as the figurehead of a feverish zeitgeist that has already displayed itself through cocaine, unnatural debauchery, native music, and the bellowing of cattle, and now touts its latest feverish fervor to us.

Expressionism wants nothing to do with any given external world; instead it expresses its so-called inner world—or rather, seeks to express it—just as it hovers within him in a fluctuating appearance, as a turmoil of his imaginings - it sometimes succeeds very precisely in hinting at this contemporary inner world, this substitute for fate, on canvas or on wood, and nowhere do we recognize the essence of the spirit of the age better: one must give Expressionism credit for that.

Since we too wish to recognize these things seriously and judge them for their own fruitfulness, let us also consider it here, as it immediately strikes us: here too, there is a lack of consolidation into lasting thoughts—the age lacks creative genius, whatever it may try to undertake.

There is as little anchoring in Expressionism as there is in Impressionism; this undulating, tangled ebb and flow of ideas, this undifferentiated ferment of inner images—this is all that Expressionism can offer on its own, and since it seeks to turn its weakness into a virtue, it pretends to offer only the "spiritual."

We, however, recognize in it the very end of an effeminate age: the blurring of boundaries between all ideas is to be painted, drawn, poetized, and set to music; the effeminate state of the spirit is to become the law of art, and that is the abyss at which our time stands.

I once dreamed of a law of sound that was a tree and grew green leaves; another time, in a dream, the little word "of course"—which I had intended to place quite clearly and as unavoidable in a sentence in a planned letter to my landlord—this "of course" appeared to me in the same dream as a small tree that shot up before me in the middle of a narrow forest path and could not be bypassed - thus, in the stream of ideas left to its own devices, image intertwines with thought, image with image, thought with thought, into intermediate forms that the clearly waking will can very rarely still grasp.

It is a woman's whim to want to be right out of such undifferentiated intermediate forms of thought and imagination.

Expressionism is effeminate, like the entire age that we live in; Impressionism could at least be a bully, and bullies are somewhat masculine, but neither of the two movements were creative art—one must say "was" even of Expressionism, for things move quickly today.

A leading itinerant preacher of Expressionism had given me, as his final trump card, the assurance that he knew of only five people who had actually understood what Expressionism was; when I asked him about the other four, a pitiful response came out.

Expressionism, too, is already a thing of the past - all metropolitan art is a passing trend and excitement, while all creative art comes from the solitary, from those of a masculine spirit who see the world as Albrecht Dürer saw it, in Goethe's words:

"...its steadfast life and masculinity,
its inner measure and constancy."

This is how the creative expression of a man and his world takes shape.

Expressionism also wants to be expression, but just as Rembrandt was also an Impressionist and yet the label is ridiculous for him, so every label is ridiculous in the face of all great art.
Gothic art, in its development from the Nordic scrollwork (animal ornamentation) to its decline in the Southern Renaissance, has always been something of an expressive art; the Expressionists also shout much about Gothic art to the masses, and yet how ridiculous the label is once again, for Gothic art is an art of masculinity and permanence - it has indeed achieved the impossible: to anchor the high aspirations and eternal striving of the Nordic people, the entire stormy surge of the Nordic soul, into enduring thoughts.
Truly, the word of the Lord in "Faust" is spoken to the creative artists of Nordic blood:

"But you, the true sons of the gods,
rejoice in the living, rich beauty!
That which is becoming, which eternally acts and lives,
envelops you with the love of sweet boundaries,
and that which hovers in wavering appearance,
fortify with enduring thoughts!"

Thus have the Nordic masters worked; thus has Rembrandt's love for every creature of the earth created a work of the deepest Christianity of the Nordic kind; thus from this spirit are the cathedrals of German cities built; thus has Albrecht Dürer, of a manly spirit, wrested from nature—as he himself puts it—an art of constancy and inner measure; thus did Johann Sebastian Bach, the master of inner measure and constancy, compose his fugues, which stride forth like the destiny of a mighty figure; thus did they all, the true sons of the North, delight in the living, rich beauty, and lived their "firm life."
We, on the other hand, are the people of a barren age that knows nothing more of creation: no longer masters of language, unskilled in any work of construction, without destiny or a sense of fate in life, leaderless in the state, too weak for faith, too scattered for true knowledge, corrupted by pleasure, too cowardly to overcome, a disgust to ourselves—thus we drift on!

Creative power is lacking in life as in art - we see in the masters of German art what it means to be an artist: art is not merely the reproduction of an impression, as Impressionism maintains, nor merely the expression of a flight of fancy, as Expressionism maintains, but it is, above all else, the shaping of a destiny.
This means that one must have a destiny if one wishes to create genuine art - one cannot simply sit in a warm studio with paints and brushes and then be quite diligent, while outside the great temptations and trials are laid in wait.

I once got into a conversation with a sculptor about British global power, and had tried to make him understand how fundamentally sound the self-interest was that built the British Empire; I had tried to convey to him the temptation and the soul-forging power and danger of a vision of dominion - the sculptor was completely absorbed in the discussion, I could sense that.
But suddenly he broke off, withdrew, and said, “I could lose myself in such thoughts.” - these are the wretched souls, the half-souls, who do not want to lose themselves, who lack the stuff to burn their candle at both ends, to borrow a Bismarckian expression: whoever cannot lose himself in the great subjects of human life for a few hours in the studio, where he ought to find himself enriched, is—measured by his claim to be called an artist—nothing more than a nobody.
It does not matter that an artist knows about the art of statecraft, certainly not; what does matter is that a person who wishes to enrich the spiritual heritage of his people should not merely move about in a studio, but step out into the world, live, will, grapple with all that is alive in the world, experience the forces of his time, and come to know the people of his time through hatred and love - painting is secondary, while living is first in everything, for only from living life does a destiny spring forth.

Heroic art is solely the shaping of a destiny, and springs from a mindset—not from the escapist mindset of workshop busyness, but only from the mindset of a heroic person; only he who has first forged himself into a hero will be able to create a work of Nordic art - the divine figures who lived among the German people lived heroically enough to forge themselves and their work in the fire of a destiny.
The situation is dire for the artists of this age, for destiny and spirit are lacking; most artists of this age lend themselves to the viewer only for a thoroughly materialistic observation, and they are thus living beings who excrete art.
In the course of a conversation with a diligent, industrious painter who called himself apolitical, it came to the point where he, sitting calmly, explained to me that it was completely indifferent to him (“it doesn’t matter”) whether he were a French or German citizen, as long as he could paint - to be able to paint—that is the escapist mindset of the rootless, who let themselves be acted upon, as long as they can paint; it is at such people that the phrase “heroic outlook,” as Schiller so eloquently put it, is aimed:

“There is nobility in the moral world as well: common natures pay with what they do, and noble ones with what they are.”

I now hear a thousand times the objection that people without a homeland or convictions could still be “great” artists - that may apply to many whom one commonly cites as artists—to a dense swarm of singers, actors, painters, poets, musicians, filmmakers, and tightrope walkers—but it does not apply to art born of destiny, for to live one’s life as destiny means to have risen from the depths, where only the great powers of conviction still reign; it means, like Faust, to have penetrated to the “Mothers” and to have beheld:

“Formation, transformation, the eternal entertainment of the eternal spirit, surrounded by images of every creature.”

Only the great seers, who have experienced the realm of the “Mothers” within themselves, are, as Dürer says, “inwardly full of form”, and must carry away their manhood from the struggle with the powers of

fate; they do not rest until they emulate Goethe's Earth Spirit, living "in the floods of life, in the storm of deeds", and having stood firm where the forces of their time roar in high surf.
The creator of a great future has always been the earth-born man who, in joy or pain, often in hatred, but always in passion, has experienced his people and his fatherland, and whom the clamour of battle between two earthly powers has roused from every sleep - he has always been, like Faust, the undaunted one:

"...and what is allotted to all of humanity,
I will enjoy within my inner self:
My spirit grow old with the highest and the deepest
as they heap their joy and sorrow upon my breast;
I thus expand my own being to encompass theirs
and, like them, in the end, I too shall shatter!"

Such is the state of the creator of heroic art - he takes his stand where a beginning is to be made and where it is hardest, where a work of art is always at the same time a work of conviction.
The artist of this age lacks conviction, and he must put up with it - it is half repulsive and half amusing to see how the masses, who are his contemporary world, stare at him as if he were a strange beast excreting art; people have grown accustomed to this and take pride in not passing judgment, instead viewing the latest absurdities of the contemporary artists as the most exciting part of their newspaper: these artists' marriages and divorces, these artists' "experiences," which the "great" artist has then turned into this or that play or even film - all of this the philistine, the enlightened man of our time, takes in down to the last detail, just as one would the natural history of fascinatingly strange animals.
The artist must put up with being viewed in this way - better yet, he gladly puts up with it, for this contemporary fame among the masses secures his income.

One is sometimes reminded that, in a bygone era, a great artist cried out to his brothers of high spirit:

"Humanity's destiny is placed in your hands—preserve it!
It sinks with you, but with you it will rise!"

- Schiller

We begin to understand why, for Plato, the Beautiful is not an independent idea, but participates in the idea of the Good, the highest idea - this is the certainty of the great artist: that while the work of art stands on its own, blissfully beautiful, art itself and its creators participate in the work of the spirit that is to be.
The creators have therefore never been connoisseurs of art, and have always despised the aesthete and the "artist of life"; the creator will always experience all art only as the joyful battle cry of his peers.
Often he will linger least of all before a work of art, because the struggle of the great forces of the spirit leaves him no idle hour - what is, after all, the entire history of art to him? The hero always stands at the dawn of a world, where everything lies open to creation and all affirmation shines.

What do we still know of heroic art; if it were to come, would we still possess the freshness of the senses it demands? We are, as it were, torn apart in every sense by the thousandfold clamor of advertising drums, having long since lost our pure vision.

No example can better teach us, who live in the present, what creative power and the art of fresh senses are than that of our Mozart, precisely because Mozart is not the restless one, the tormented and suffering giant like Beethoven; it is precisely because he did not create a musical world of agonizing questions and terrible realizations; it is precisely because he is—one might say—the pure creator, the profligate in himself—precisely for all these reasons does he teach our present more than any other.
The art of the 19th century has always been far more concerned with the struggle of existential questions and has only rarely, and only for fleeting moments, understood how to create a perfect work of art, just as Beethoven, above all, understood the questionable nature of existence.
The art of the 19th century has carried this fragment of Beethoven's world—the struggle and the questions—with it as an inheritance, but only that it has also rendered this fragment poor and weak in its own right - the art of the age has become entangled in a hundred "worldviews", and seeks to resolve so-called questions of humanity; every play aspires to be a "problem play", and every novel a depiction of this or that truth of the day - yet with all these so-called problems, no truly creative achievement was realized, neither in poetry, nor in music, nor in the visual arts.

Mozart remains unrivaled as the captivating creator of lavish abundance: pure "problems"—not this or that being "depicted," nor this or that sonata intending to convey this or that—but always the same revelation of sweeping, creative abundance.
Goethe has the "Boy Guide" reveal in "Faust":

"I am extravagance, I am poetry."

Truly: the poetic work is extravagance, the work of art is extravagance, and it is nothing else; whoever seeks something "behind" it, some proposition comprehensible to the mind, is a barbarian and is, as Hölderlin says:

"...deeply incapable of any divine feeling, for he is corrupted to the marrow for the sake of the holy Graces."

We are so thoroughly corrupted to the core, to the delight of all true art, that we no longer know what to make of Schiller's words on the nature of art:

"Slender and light, as if sprung from nothing, the image stands before the enraptured gaze."

Art is, time and again, nothing more to us than a perversion of philosophical contemplation, merely a stance on the questions of the age, merely a self-portrait of the mind and life of struggling human beings, merely a "judgment day over one's own self" (Ibsen), merely a grappling with the meaning of the world—certainly, art is all of that, but it is meant to be far more: it is meant to be a revelation of how alive, blissful, all-pervading, and self-sacrificing pure creation is.
What the concepts of abundance and beauty are remains hidden from us all; that is why everything around us and within us remains so unadorned, and we never feel "slender and light"; that is why few know who Mozart is, for the superficial see in him an ever-cheerful man, the educated master of form, the connoisseurs of style the master of German Rococo—he is all of these as well, but to most people he is a so-called pleasure, and only then is one "enraptured" by him.

That one ought truly to be enchanted, carried away, a recipient of a great gift—only a few sense this, for Mozart is out of step with the times, and is in no way and in no respect related to this age - he is the creativity we lack, the exuberance we have forgotten, and the festivity of the earth of which we are incapable; he is the creator under whose hands everything luminous takes a “slender and light” form, the self-sacrificing one who, above all the torments of his daily life, thinks only of giving, and who, at the end of his life, gave himself this Requiem as a funeral celebration—before which we tremble and ask: where did this man of wisdom draw the abundance of such generosity?

Mozart’s work is the purest creation, and therefore it should mean the purest bliss to us - how pitiful is the music of our age then compared to Mozart’s! Form is lacking, and abundance is in short supply; we have achieved a great din with multi-amplified and multi-voiced instruments, but the composers of our time have never moved beyond a mechanical churning of notes in which a fragment of a clear melody occasionally surfaces, beyond a fever of sound effects that they cunningly and confidently manipulate. As children of their time, they have repeatedly confused mass with meaning; that is why there is a “Symphony of a Thousand”[13].

They have tried every possible new sound technique, right down to the noise-making instruments of African or Asian peoples; they have gone through everything from the scales of the Gypsies to those of the East Asians, and yet have created nothing that could withstand comparison in creative power and richness with the attempts of the young Mozart.

The 19th century has led us into such powerlessness and deprivation with all its great clamour that only now has the time for great things arrived - it is a hallmark of our time to first “interest” the press and draw up a “programme” before any work is done: only now has true art been discovered, only now have the world’s mysteries been solved or justice, only now has human rights, and freedom been found - but the result was always futile: the advertising clamour was greater than the work that was to follow.

A Copernicus once thought his work through to clarity over the course of a generation before it seemed ripe to him - in creative times, one took things more seriously.

[13] Symphony No. 8 by Gustav Mahler. - The Translator

German Identity and the Heroic Ideal

What are we to do with all this praise of bygone eras - do we wish to return to the Middle Ages, or to the era of our Nordic heroism; do we wish to reintroduce the customs and institutions of a world that has fallen into decline, to restore the state and the church, the judiciary and the arts, and all the old ways of our ancestors? — Far be it from us!

The 19th century has not passed us by without leaving its mark: it was our destiny, and the nobleman loves his destiny despite everything - we do not wish to drag what is mortal through the ages like a mummy, but instead, we must find what is immortal—the spirit that has created the capable throughout the ages—and strive for it anew.
We want the same things the 19th century wanted, but we also want much more beyond that - we do not wish to repeat Gothic art or turn over once more the mummified remnants of thoughts that have been thought to their conclusion, for just as impartially as Impressionism, art should step before the landscape; the artist should once again create for us, from his vision and destiny, a lasting thought that speaks to us of the power of creation.
How powerfully the unfolding of events can be perceived—that is what we wish to experience through our own courage: how many or how few steps Luther took beyond the Roman faith, and how much must therefore be "believed" to be valid in the eyes of the church, is for us a discarded, historically worn-out garment, and no longer a source of inspiration; it is instead Luther's spirit, the courage to break with the present for the sake of the future, that we seek!

Let us cast off the old paternalism of state and church, but let us also cast off just as much the paternalism of the masses, the dishonorable and the shameless; let us cast off the blind obedience of the old, but just as much the blind licentiousness of the new; let us cast off the rigidity of the old, but just as much the instability of the new.
Let us be awakened by what is timeless: fidelity to our own essence, the spirit of all the heroes who have accomplished a work! We do not wish to have Bach's fugues repeated in a new musical art, but his creative seriousness and clarity; not Beethoven's sonatas, but the proud perseverance in stormy passion; not the ideas of a Fichte, but rather the spirit that lets all things German flow from the eternal; not the poetic form of Goethe, but rather that strength and power of imagination to make the most foreign things part of one's own spirit; not Bismarck's concepts of statehood, but rather the spirit of one sacrificing oneself in the service of the fatherland.
Once again: it all comes down to the spirit that must be forged within us before it is too late; only the courage of our Nordic blood can help in this.

It will be the hardest work any people has ever undertaken, for we Germans have sunk deep into this age of consummate sinfulness - yet something of the old thoroughness remains in us: we overlook nothing, and we have waded into every dissolution and swamp, right where they are deepest.
Goethe once said:

"It is the character of the Germans that they become serious over everything, and that everything becomes serious for them."

Truly, we have become serious over the flimsiest of things: what for the Italians is a Gallic playfulness becomes a heavy burden upon us, and we become gravely serious over it; the many shallow adultery farces that one can still enjoy on French stages—and enjoy with amusement—because of their witty style—the Germans cannot take them in such a Gallic, cheerful way, and in Germany they become vulgar. As it has appeared in the language, so it is here again: the German has it hardest on earth, for he can only live nobly or vulgarly; the cheerful middle ground eludes him - it seems that he cannot live beyond good and evil.
The German spirit has had to fight hardest for itself, and must fight hardest for itself again and again: it has always been the most tested on earth; it has always been faced with nothing but decisions, has suffered the greatest losses, and has performed the greatest deeds.
That it could lose itself as it has lost itself was part of the best in it: that he could, as devoutly as "Hans im Glück", give up possession after possession and almost forget what was most his own when striving for the knowledge of a foreign spirit; that he could take things so seriously, even where there was not much to gain but rather much to lose—that is not only his fault, but is also his open, foolish heart.
The French are born French, the English are born English, but Germans are born as trusting "citizens of the world", and must then prove whether they can forge themselves into Germans - to be French, to be English, can also be a moral achievement, but to be German always means having, in a sense, performed a moral act.
Many Germans only experience their Germanness abroad; that is why the appearance of the average Frenchman is not unpleasant, that of the average Englishman often pleasing, but that of the average German so questionable and often so shameful - it is the process of becoming German is missing: the proud awareness of being part of a collective force and of being German at every moment.

A Frenchwoman who respects the German spirit asked me whether the German, emerging from the World War and his decline, would finally find a love of his country, and whether he would then still write and speak his language so carelessly.
It is difficult to make the foreigner understand the questionable nature of everything average in Germany, and even more difficult to convey the possibilities of conscious Germanness - while the French spirit has understood how to create a pleasing manner of conduct for an entire people—though there are those who say this is merely the work of a skilled head waiter, thereby hinting at the limits of the French spirit—the French spirit has also managed to educate an entire people in unbridled, patriotic passion, and in a passionate love for their language - that is an exemplary achievement, exemplary above all for us Germans.
But what is called the French spirit—whether in its form as "génie latin", or in the other as "esprit gaulois"—both are fully realized, historical achievements.
What we call the French spirit today is entirely the work of pre-revolutionary France: this applies from architecture down to the tasteful labels on French perfume bottles; it is precisely in this French spirit that one can see what the singular endeavor of an entire people was once capable of.
However, this spirit has also been fully developed, and has fully unfolded; today it is already more a rigid formula than a joyful new creation.
The French are not a primordial people—we have seen this in our examination of the language: one need only mention a figure like Bach or Kant, just one from among our great creators, to see that the French spirit is too feeble for such works; its greatest figures will always be comparable only to the middling men of the German spirit.

It lies in the German spirit that it sets itself the infinite tasks intended to pave the way for an entire future - that is why the German spirit so often lives as a forerunner, as a first-born, as the unfinished; that is why it will rarely be pleasing, but rather questionable and full of striving and pointing beyond.
The finished and the at rest, the thoroughly thought-out and the fully conceived, are not its work—the breaking forth, the striving, the burst-open gate, a beginning before all beginnings, and a completion beyond all completions: thus it seeks the world - that is why the achievements of the German spirit stand as towering as the Gothic cathedrals on our soil; that is why the works born of the German spirit stride, as it were, in the vast, open space, solitary from eternity to eternity, like the sole passacaglia that Bach ever wrote; that is why the history of the German spirit is no unity, no step-by-step sense of progression.
The French spirit has become so brilliant in heightened competition from generation to generation: it was an inheritance, a passing on, a joyfully renewed spirit from generation to generation until the age of the French Revolution, when creative power in the West was extinguished - the French spirit has always been a tradition that the French have admired, toward which they have joyfully striven, just as young ducklings repeatedly rush from the egg into the water.
The German spirit is hardly something to be inherited - that is why there is hope for it, in that it did not die out in the age of the Revolution and in the 19th century, for it was never passed down from generation to generation; the solitary creators of the German spirit never thought of inheritance, because they themselves had derived their joy in existence from the fact that they came from beginnings.
To be German means: to start anew from oneself time and again; this is the hardest of earthly labors, but the German spirit cannot live any other way.

Tradition has never existed in German history—for better or for worse—which is to our good fortune in the history of German intellectual life, but to immeasurable detriment in the history of the German state and its average citizens - here we see once again the questionable nature of the German character among the nations, and our task of binding the various fleeing forces of the soul to a single, manly will.
The sound tradition of the English spirit was the good fortune of all average English citizens; we have already considered these matters, but what is a blessing in the life of a people and a state has proved to the Englishman, in the spiritual realm, to be a deficiency, a limitation—a limitation, true, to what is useful in practice, which is always a clear value in the life of a people, but nonetheless the constricting limitation that has turned “merry old England,” a land of music and folk songs, Shakespeare’s land, into a world bank and department store, a state apparatus that is powerful, yet somehow abandoned by many benevolent spirits.
It is the same thing again: if one thinks of Beethoven, Grünewald, Mozart, Leibniz, one recognizes the limits of the English spirit: the Englishman has strode through history as a counter-image to the German, never losing himself, indifferently passing by the temptations of worldviews, where the German would have lived a year of his spirit - as the English historian Seeley once wrote:

“It seems as though we conquered half the world in a fit of absent-mindedness, and while we did so, we did not tolerate the newly acquired lands influencing our imagination or our way of thinking in the slightest.”

The Englishman’s inability to lose himself, to forget everything for the sake of deep insight, his rigid self-assertion where a broad-mindedness of the soul should have granted him rich vision—all these statesmanlike virtues have become flaws of the soul for him, and for all the nobility of a true Englishman,

as a German one still stands before him as before a brother of Germanic blood, whom one would like to tear away at least once in one's life—out of a sense of self-evidence, heritage, and the finest upbringing—for his own sake, so that he might once, with Faust the German, descend into the realm of the Mothers and learn to see—to see rather than observe, to see rather than examine, to consider, to choose, to see as one can see from the Hellenic and German spirit.
The Englishman never loses himself - therefore, he never finds himself either, just as the German can find himself; the Englishman has tamed the passion of the experience of existence to such an extent that it must serve him as a good daily task, but in doing so it has become rational, so that it is no longer a passion at all.
Only the passionate person experiences the world as it is; the Englishman, meanwhile, experiences it all too easily as his sphere of commerce and his property; this must stifle his insights and debase the spirit.
There is no reason for us Germans today to consider ourselves superior to the Englishman, for the average German, after all, experiences the world in a more shameful way—I shall not elaborate further here.

Ever since that gravest indictment Hölderlin was compelled to level against us Germans in his "Hyperion," since that time, our accusers have not been silent, and could no longer remain silent, as they witnessed the 19th century beginning to run its course - it is yet also the same Hölderlin that sings of the fatherland again and again, most beautifully in the song that begins:

"O holy heart of the peoples, O Fatherland,
all-enduring like the silent Mother Earth
utterly misunderstood, even though from your
bounty, the strangers have their best."

The depth of the German spirit is its defining legacy, while the breadth of experience of the German spirit is unimaginable to foreign peoples; even the concept and term "Erlebnis" (experience) are uniquely German, and can only be experienced, not voiced.
To be German means to be called to a destiny, and because this is what it means, the phenomenon of the masses is nowhere more repulsive than in Germany - that is why the present age is the most shameful time for the German: in the 19th century, the Frenchman has become more hollow and vain, the Englishman more selfish and shallow, but the German has become un-German and thus contemptible.
The German spirit must, as it were, demand the highest of itself, and it is precisely this spirit that has been most distorted in the 19th century - is it then surprising that Germany's reputation has fallen so low?

Heroic Statesmanship

One thing is certain here: heroic statesmanship can only come from a hero, not from ministers, and certainly not from representatives of a majority, from the emissaries of the masses - it can only emanate from a man who, in the course of his own life, has deeply and purely experienced the landscape and the character of his people, as well as their traditions, customs, and history; who has struggled for the essence of the people to which he belongs as much as for the meaning of his own life, and who, in moments of insight, senses that he is the Chosen One, the only one, and that his time has come.
He must possess an insight into destiny and revere as a blessing the fact that, at the same time as he was born, questions arose from his people that have led him toward his own destiny; he must also experience this certainty, which is granted only to a few creators, namely, to be, in a single moment of his own life, as old as the age of his own people with which he was born.
Goethe, by virtue of his disposition, experienced this within himself and put it into words; Bismarck's life was also—whether he was aware of it or not—the life of such a Chosen One - the idea of destiny, in its interweaving of the hour of the world and the will of man, opens up to us once more, and we sense how a hero might look upon the unfolding events.
This is a silent experience of the hero as a statesman: to be ready for the destiny in which individual fate and the fate of the people are entwined in meaning and grandeur.

How richly blessed is a people led to power by such a hero! He is the one truly born of the people, the son of the earth, who has the courage to step into new beginnings, to clear the land for new sowing, to drain the swamps, and to remain active into old age like Faust, who, at a hundred years old and blind, stands at the edge of the grave yet still thinks once more of a new beginning - only a hero of this kind will found a Reich in which a people, "not safe, yet active and free" (Goethe, Faust), steeled for power, can live out its days of work and celebration.
Heroic statesmanship emanates only from the hero, and not from the busybodies who know everything: statistics, stock market reports, public opinion, favorable opportunities, and the exigencies of the day; not from those who know how to do things, from the eloquent speakers who act important and deliver speeches while quietly knowing from their own experience that water boils everywhere and human nature prevails everywhere.
True statesmanship does not spring from doctrines of world happiness and is not formed in party politics; it does not stem from the shrewd ones who know how to lie with fine words for the public good, nor from the shrewd ones who have good and secret connections with the few hundred financiers of the whole world, and are skilled in secret meetings and covert dealings on supervisory boards—these are all the pests of the state.
Nor is anything to be expected from the well-meaning, the so-called liberal humanitarians who want quite a lot of progress: from all these powerless people, nothing is to be expected.

Much has been said in our day about state leadership and leaders: people have repeatedly pointed out, with Schiller, that the majority is nonsense; Goethe's famous saying has also been cited, which so confidently and, as it were, with the tone of quotation marks, employs the cowardly, euphemistic foreign words of majority rule, and should therefore be repeated here:

"Nothing is more repulsive than the 'majority', for it consists of a few strong leaders, of rogues who accommodate themselves, of weaklings who assimilate, and of the masses who follow along without the slightest idea of what they want."

That is why Goethe, who had been elected to the Weimar State Parliament, never actually attended the sessions:

"But why, then, are you so rarely present at our sessions? - I do not wish to sweat through boredom; I am always aware for the majority."

All these things are too well known, and they need not be listed here again, above all because the discerning person knows the situation: that the blind person is usually also blindly faithful, and also because the views of public life depend less on the way our minds perceive them than on our disposition.

When considering the political life of our time without getting lost in details, one is constantly reminded of Goethe's words, which so unerringly captures all the phenomena of the 19th century and the present, and which has been repeatedly cited as a foundation in this book:

"Before the revolution, everything was an aspiration; afterward, everything turned into a demand."

The truth of this prophetic statement has been clearly demonstrated to us in the intellectual history of the 19th century, and it holds no less true in political history: whenever a true man of his time arose in our age, he delivered a speech that dissolved the capable endeavors of his forefathers into demands, and when it was necessary to guarantee that so many speeches full of demands might be delivered, the age has created the so-called popular assemblies with their demanding majorities and minorities - we therefore stand before Bismarck as before a giant of antiquity, because he was truly the last of a line of creative statesmen.
What has come to govern the West with him or after him are all descendants of a genuine statecraft—either cunning practitioners of the maneuvers reserved for the masters, as in England, or—which is far worse—respectable, harmless souls who do not even know what a maneuver is at all, as in Germany; the creative statecraft that achieved heroic feats in England during its ambitious era dried up there in the 19th century (a marginal phenomenon being Disraeli), just as the Prussian statecraft of Frederick the Great or Bismarck did here.

Heroic statesmanship—to say it once more—is resolute and creative statesmanship; it is bold statesmanship that knows how to awaken in a people something new and vibrant, a vigorous striving, and its finest Western examples from the past are found in Prussian and English history.
One must have the courage to make a clear distinction: it is never, ever heroic statesmanship that is content merely to satisfy and appease the demands of public opinion and, outwardly, to divert and placate the desires of other states; such governance reveals nothing other than the hallmark of an age that cannot say no, and it is this spirit of flight that has defined our times, this unheroic style of governance—which, as a painful realization, the German has mostly practiced in this era.
Bismarck once characterized the conception of the state that the German alone seems to know, and from which he sought to wrestle him free, as follows:

"We do not pursue foreign policy, that is, no active policy, but confine ourselves to picking up the stones that fall into our garden and brushing off the dirt that clings to us as best we can."

There is a lack of the will to power, and therefore a lack of engagement with events - Bismarck once put it this way:

"Our politics disheartens me: we remain driftwood, blown about on our own waters by foreign winds."

The art of statecraft is creation and, like all creation, springs solely from passion and the lust for power - whether born of love or of hate, it is the deed alone that counts—we have recognized this! That is why statecraft, heroic statecraft, is not statistics, administrative experience, or anything of the sort, and does not come from a handbook of political science or from warm party enthusiasm—none of that is sought here: what is sought here is solely power, the expansion of the Reich and its culture.
Fichte recognized this, the heroic teacher of morals, and that is why he republished a textbook on the art of statecraft—parts of Machiavelli's steel-hard book—with his own additions for his time; Fichte was the manly thinker who wrestled deeply and boldly with the heroic idea, and who recognized that heroic civilization will exist only where a people rejoices in its power.

Only from power does the mightiest spirit of a people arise - in reality, every human spirit yearns for it, and where a spirit is powerful, it demands eternal power.
Peoples—men and nations alike—are measured by their conception of power: it is the master of arms in the course of events, calling for combativeness; it is a serious word and one that holds a moral core for the strong:
Might is right - this saying means: you have learned that life on earth is a struggle, and have seen how the well-equipped are the victors—so equip yourselves! Whoever has truly grasped why might equals right, and how this statement becomes a moral imperative, must be made capable by this insight; he must see the goal toward which all state life is meant to lead, this goal of disposition: be a strong people of virtue, and you will earn a right to power; be a capable people, and your power must become a right; exercise virtue through your power, and your right will be a privilege!
But the German people have scarcely felt the force of a concept of power, and this has been the despair and shame of so many fine, strong sons. It is of no avail: whoever has not felt within himself the urge to master this passion has not felt the fullness of earthly existence, has lived meekly where he could have lived strongly, has spared himself in life where he could have consumed himself, and has crouched among the pygmies where he could have stood among those who burn bright.

"I shall gain dominion, property: the deed is everything, not the glory."

So speaks Faust, who would rather sell his fine soul to the Devil than renounce deed, dominion, and property.
The German has otherwise fallen prey to all manner of weak devils and spirits of renunciation—if only he would once surrender himself to the spirit of dominion! It is so easy to label property as plunder when one knows force only as a mass flood in which one drowns in, when one does not know the power of the Normans to sail south in a few Viking ships and found states; it is so easy to label the ruling oppressors

and slave traders when one fails to grasp the deeds that must be accomplished to win a piece of land in a tropical country to feed one's own densely populated people - how could a nobody possibly understand the will to rule that burned within Cecil Rhodes, the blond, blue-eyed Englishman with the vulture-like features, yearning for realization!
"I wish all this to be English," Cecil Rhodes said while looking at a map of Africa: he had grasped that expansion meant proof of a people's competence and vitality - as he once wrote:

"After reading the history of other countries, I saw that expansion was everything, and that, since the surface of the earth is limited, the great task should be to take as much of it as we possibly can."

Thus this man worked undaunted on this idea, "from the Cape to Cairo", as an "empire-builder", as the English say, as one who expands the Reich, as we might put it in German.
Such a life is not about the possession of money, about growing old in prestige and wealth, or anything else—action is everything here, not fame; here it is solely about what Faust experiences as the finest, highest moment: the expansion of empire; for this purpose, property has been conquered for the empire, so that on the expanded territory "child, the young man and the old may spend a fine, productive year." The power, the might that Faust acquires is right, and the property he acquires is not plunder, but the expansion of his realm; this is how the moral meaning of the phrase "might makes right" is to be understood, for only in this way does heroic statecraft—which is creation—take effect.

Such statecraft has never emanated from parliaments in Germany—one should instead translate "parliaments" as "houses of idle chatter."
Representative bodies deal with the "demands" of the present - that is, as it were, their value as an advisory voice, and one should expect no more from them; to create the mindset of a capable generation—that is, to exert an "aspiration" into the present—has never been the work of a representative body, but always only the work of great statesmen.
May the true statesman arise among us! May he come to create as he must create out of heroic love, out of heroic hatred, and out of heroic responsibility; may he create, as he must, out of a fervent joy in the landscape and the character of his people, out of his Nordic blood, and out of a mighty passion for the power and expansion of empire!

No easy task is prepared for him: the researcher proceeds from thought, the artist from the purity of fine perception, and both arrive at works that carry their perfection within themselves, each in its own way; the statesman, meanwhile, must proceed from reality, must wrest a work from a conception of river courses and mountains, railways, waterways, trade relations, and working conditions, from a conception of defensive and offensive forces, of mineral resources and agricultural yields—he must wrest a work from a thousand material and spiritual forces and conditions of a country and a people, and from all the reality that only a hero can penetrate, he must create a distant future.
Only the audacious audacity that has no idea what it is doing or what it should do can drive one to such a work, or else it happens that the God-fearing courage of a strong man risks his very life for it - as Bismarck once remarked:

"I am God's soldier, and wherever He sends me, there I must go - I believe that He sends me and shapes my life as He needs it."

That is a good faith for a heroic man.

To recognize reality—that is the most difficult task of heroic statesmanship, one that requires a Chosen One; it is shameful to think here of the "man of reality" of our time, for he is the antithesis of the hero. The hero does not gain reality through many procedures and nimble busyness; he is the man of the earth, to whom reality is as akin as his fate, and it comes to him from the purity of his being to know at what moment in world events he has stepped into.
Knowledge of facts is not the first and only thing about him, but his grasp of the facts that distinguishes him: he has dared to hear in the events of the world the call for his work—that is the statesman's all-or-nothing; he must have the heroic courage to stake his entire life on a single roll of the dice, and if this choice frightens him, then he is not the right man.
He must take upon himself the heaviest burden in the world, namely, to be judged by success, for he knows the masses - but his will is firm.
As Bismarck said at the outbreak of war in 1866:

"If we are defeated, I will not return here; I will fall in the final assault - one can die only once, and it is better to die than to be defeated."

Thus the hero dares, for he knows he can fill his life with only this one purpose: that he may serve generations far into the future; as any other choice would be flight and defeat, so he presses forward.
The passion for power leads him on a sure path, and his faith in God grows deeper and newer every day - in triumph and success, where the insolent would grow more insolent, the hero must become more humble than he who believes in fate.
Bismarck once stated what matters in the art of statecraft:

"To hear the rushing past of the deity and to grasp a corner of her robe—that is all."

For the true statesman, his office is a service to the future; he seeks to awaken the right spirit in future generations within his state and for his state, for the goal of the state is, in fact, an independent culture, and the path to that goal is: the expansion of power both internally and externally.
The culture of the people, the morality and greatness of an entire people, and the grand vision of an entire people, cannot be found in some backwater; they can only be found where the struggle for power rages.
The goal of the state is to create a mindset and establish a culture - this means nothing other than forging a citizen out of the petty bourgeois, out of the man of money-making and so-called comfort—it will not be possible without a firm hand!
But he must become a citizen—that is the state's task: the citizen must become a man who knows what it means to be born on earth, in the midst of the great powers' struggle for existence, who experiences it as both a duty and a joy to be born into a grand context of events and who, wherever he may be, feels with just pride that he belongs to a noble people - thus is the obligation created for him, to be an example of this spirit at every moment of his life.

Inseparable from a people's national will is the pride of that people in being the first on earth - many so-called "savage" peoples simply call themselves "the people" in their own language, regarding other

peoples as somehow foreign, non-human, or inferior—this is, despite everything, a sound concept that testifies to their strength of character.
The Greeks despised all other peoples as barbarians, and they were right to do so, for their pride gave rise to the high Greek civilization; it is also often repeated how the English place themselves first, believing that England exists for the salvation of all peoples, and see all others far behind as close to animality—they do well to do so, despite everything, for this firm belief has made them great.
The following applies as a law regarding the worth of a people, as Dostoevsky says:

"Every great people believes, and must believe, that in it, and in it alone, lies the salvation of the world; that it lives solely to take the lead among all peoples, and to guide them to the ultimate goal predestined for them all - this great self-importance, the belief that one wants to and can have the final say in the world, is the pledge of a people's highest life."

If only we had such faith! But we are the objective, harmless believers in cosmopolitanism, the harmless adherents of a brotherhood of nations: we are everything and nothing at all—a mere shrug of the shoulders to other proud peoples.

The coming statecraft, if it seeks to create, must forge a German people once more from the shapeless mass of Central Europeans that we have become—but it will not be possible without the firm grip of a strong hand!
In all parties, people have seen how everything is just a sham; that in secret, the discerning members of all parties admit that a guest house made for idle chatter, no matter what electoral system it comes from, remains a guest house, and that talk upon talk never produces conviction - what then are we to do?
Our time is not lacking in doctrines of world happiness, and there are enough dubious preachers running about us - there is, however, only one thing to do so that we may finally emerge from all this misery: we must ruthlessly overcome the entire present age, in all its contemporary manifestations, within ourselves. It must begin with each individual; the hardest work is to be done within us, and conditions will change only with us, for every age has the conditions that befit it and that it deserves - some say that overcoming such things is merely a negative endeavor, and let us concede that for the moment, although to deny a dissolution, a blurring of boundaries, a lack of conviction—in short, to deny negation—means as much as to shape, to demarcate, to awaken conviction, or in short, to affirm it - one need only know with certainty what one does not want, as Richard Wagner once explained, and then one will surely bring into being what one does want.
That is indeed a terrible admission, and yet, it is the only promise of our days: that the spirit of the age has so completely dissolved and decomposed domestic and civic community, conviction, art, and worldview that we stand at an end, at the bottomless sludge of the dregs of all times, at the most repulsive nothingness of history, and that we must therefore, if there is still anything left of us, become a beginning - that we, if there are still men among us who can no longer breathe in the decayed dregs of the West, and who feel within themselves the courage for the heaviest work of history, must then follow these men and step into the dawn of the world - it would be the rebirth of the heroic among us!
This, then, is the question of destiny that has been posed to us: you have heard of the decline and babbling of great powers, and have already deemed it inevitable—but do you have the courage to become the first counterexample; do you have the courage, through ruthless self-overcoming, to place yourselves, as a people, at a new beginning for a second time?

Whoever has once experienced this moment in the world, which we call our present, in its depths, cannot do otherwise: he must live his days in the certainty that both hang, hover and yearn to fall: decline and rebirth.
Is there still time; were we rejected or chosen; do we still have a choice; is it still within our power; is it so that we could boldly and calmly forge our own destiny; can we place ourselves heroically, as those Chosen Ones, at a new beginning and, by the power of our souls—which we ourselves have forged—step forth toward where the dawn shimmers?
We can, if we find the right will - it is not new procedures that will remake us, not new voting rights, not new institutions, but only the heroic spirit of our Nordic forefathers that will remake us! It must be for us the "old truth" of which Goethe speaks:

"The truth has long been sound,
and bound in noble fellowship -
the old truth: if only it were held fast!"

We have, after all, become well-traveled, well-educated, and scientific - so then, let us be so once and for all, thoroughly! Our science shall help us rescue the old truth from the dissolution and mire of the present; it shall show us from whence the creative forces of our antiquity and history came; it shall point out to us the heroic race to whom we owe the great deeds of our history: the doctrine of the Nordic man shall be the fundamental one upon which the education of future generations shall rest.

For the first time in world history, we people of the present have reached the point where we recognize the causes of the greatness and decline of nations, and from the foundation of such insights, the new orders in the state and in individual lives must arise: this is the unprecedented nature of our present situation, from which a beginning must emerge if the beginning is to find its heroes.

The Heroic Race

The modern European has inherited a completely clouded perception of racial characteristics, and Germans in particular—who already find it so difficult to train their eyes to see in an artistic way—walk through the streets of their cities without discerning anything from people's stature, skull shape or skin color, without suspecting anything of this or that fold of the eyelid, this shape of the cheekbone, this hair color, this softness or coarseness of the hair, or this or that gesture (for gestures are always an expression of an entire racially determined bone and muscle structure): he is ignorant of the fact that all these things are a glimpse into the natural history of Western man.

I have lived in a region of Germany where a non-Nordic population has remained stranded on the inhospitable mountain heights after the Nordic Germanic tribes, invading from the north, had driven them from the hospitable plains and the fertile foothills - it is a small, dark, dull breed of people that has not yet produced a single creative individual.
I recall how an Italian of Western race whom I knew was horrified at the sight of this population, appalled by so much of its ugliness in stature and facial features—but the neighboring Germans of Nordic blood noticed nothing, for they lack the artistic eye that, in the mental reproduction of any physical form, would perceive the corresponding sensibility through observation - when an "educated" person does finally open his eyes at the sight of such groups of pre-Germanic settlers, he speaks of remnants of Roman blood, as if the true Romans had been related to the Mongols, or he speaks of a Celtic indigenous population, as if the horsemen had not been of Nordic blood: tall, blond, and light-eyed.

There prevails among us a pitiful ignorance regarding the matters of racial differences and the racial constitution of the German people - the freshness of vision is lacking: a lack of creative insight—so characteristic of a mathematical age—clouds all our perception and disfigures our sensory life to such an extent that the rich form of the world around us cannot penetrate us whatsoever.
Our age, which is often called scientific, has—through its methods of inquiry and its purely calculating approach, which all necessarily transforms what appears to the senses into numerical expressions—brought about a state where our senses themselves are weakened and the formative power of perception is dissolved.
One should no longer even have to speak of the fact that there is no such thing as equality among human beings, nor can there be; it should be a visceral experience for every individual that racial difference entails a fundamental difference in nature, and that therefore there can never be such a thing as equality among races and among peoples—each composed of different races—in terms of nature, endowment, and goals - only in Judaism has a people ever become aware of the pervasive power of a clear concept of race, and thus, Judaism has instilled in all its members, with passion and tenacity, the conviction that although they may live scattered throughout the world, and although they may belong to the most diverse peoples, languages, creeds, and social classes, they nevertheless feel themselves to be Jews above all else, and feel bound by an oath to their special blood; this is an exemplary achievement of a blood community, and rests on the experience that racially distinct peoples are fundamentally different and separate, and that only racially similar people can experience themselves and the world in the same way.
The Jew knows that there is no such thing as "humanity"; he knows that peoples of different blood can only be communities that feel, act, and will separately, and that only on the basis of the same blood can anything lasting be founded, hence his exemplary racial concept - Disraeli, the Jew, wrote:

"Race is everything - there is no other truth, and every race must perish that carelessly allows its blood to be mixed."

It is no different: every single race must think and act differently, and must desire and will differently, than all other races.
Anyone who looks closely will discover that the same expressions of the same language must mean different things to people of different races - therefore, different races and people of different racial origins are bound to misunderstand one another, and this is what makes the governance of a racially mixed people, such as the German people, so questionable and so irreparably difficult, as long as a single racial concept has not come to dominate the concept of the state.
The German concept of the Reich—we already sense this—must be a Nordic concept, for otherwise there will be no Reich at all - we must resolve the racial question, insofar as it is a matter of the Reich, and find, as the answer, the German state of the Nordic race; then the Reich will be founded, the one that must remain ours.

To do this, we must first hold the key to world history before we can create clarity, and here once again the English statesman Disraeli, the Jew that is proud of his blood, may offer us a clue - he once wrote:

"The racial question is the key to world history, and history is often so confused precisely because it is written by people who did not understand the racial question, nor the driving forces associated with it."

Truly, everything is still in disarray here - the confusion in historiography has not diminished, and the vast majority of people have heard nothing at all about racial matters; in almost all scholarly works, the following are still confused: race and language, race and creed, race and nationality.
These universally confused views are the most widespread here - for example, people repeatedly speak of Germanic and Romance peoples as if they were different races, thus focusing on the external characteristic of linguistic affiliation and consequently overlooking the fact that, for instance, the heroic Pierre Corneille was of Nordic blood, a Norman, or that the magnificent Leonardo da Vinci was of Nordic blood, as were most of the creators of the Italian Renaissance.

There is truly only one people among us who are aware of their blood and thus of racial matters at all: Disraeli's people, the Jews.
One must make this exemplary racial loyalty quite clear to oneself and learn from it: there are Spanish, Danish, English, German, and today also Japanese Jews; there are also Catholic Jews, Protestant Jews, and Mosaic (Israelite) Jews; there are poor and rich Jews, and there are Jews who have been ennobled—at the end of the day however, they know: each one knows his own Judaism and the Judaism of all others, and they remain ever faithful.
Across countries, peoples, languages, social classes, and creeds, and despite no longer possessing a living common language of its own, the Jewish people have nevertheless held together in the belief in their "chosen" blood - for this reason, and quite understandably for this reason, the Jewish people have attained secure dominion over world capital.

Now we should take a look at the peoples of the Nordic race, whose ancestral homeland is Central to Northwestern Europe: they have been lost to the world since time immemorial, and have repeatedly been absorbed into the racial makeup of other populations since time immemorial, elevating these populations in terms of physical beauty and intellectual power, but losing themselves in the process and repeatedly disappearing into the foreign people; the important book “Alteuropa” (Old Europe), 1926, by L. Schuchhardt has examined these matters archaeologically (and my books on racial studies provide further details).

Since time immemorial, streams of Nordic blood have flowed southward and eastward - radiating from the regions of the Baltic Sea, it has, in its victorious nature, lavished its creative power in all the countries of our continent and beyond, as far as India; it brought and produced arts, high culture, worldviews, and inventions wherever it went and wherever it lived, and yet as a race it perished everywhere because it lacked racial consciousness, its own racial identity.
We know today that it was people of the Nordic race who, during the Ionian and Dorian migrations, invaded the regions that later came to be called Greece - look at the heroes as Homer describes them, and look at the gods they created in the image of their own physical form: they are of Nordic blood, tall, long-headed, blond, and light-eyed! Look at the sculptures they have left us: they bear witness to the heroic physique of Nordic blood - thus these heroes burst in upon the settled peoples of the peninsula, first slaying and exterminating whatever stood in their way, and enslaving whatever wished to remain alongside them under their rule; from their Nordic blood then came the heroic culture of the Homeric age, the temples and images of the gods, and the poems we honor.
Even on the eve of Greece’s fate, when the Nordic blood was already running dry, Plato arose from the blood of the Greek nobility, having received his name for his heroic stature and physical strength—Plato, who is our great master - this Greece was a great achievement of the Nordic race.

The Roman Empire, as created by the statesmen and generals of the Roman noble families, was another Nordic construct, and again, it was another racial achievement of the Nordic people.
The Nordic people were the nobility and of a different blood than the plebeians, and marriages between the nobility and the plebeians were initially forbidden, not because of a conflict of social status, but because of a racial conflict.
It was this Nordic blood that fought Rome’s battles, realized this masterful concept of statehood, and created the Roman Empire; this Nordic blood then dried up on the battlefields, was seeped away, and became tainted in mixed marriages—and so, here too, twilight fell.
Even in the decaying imperial era, the Nordic blood was evident in the blondness of the degenerating Roman nobility - in the end however, the masses, the inferior race, had triumphed, and ultimately the degenerate half-breeds of the late Roman urban masses no longer understood Rome’s heroic mission; they dissolved and decayed it, crying out for bread and circuses until a swamp of peoples surrounded the Mediterranean—the same swamp through which Christianity first had to pass before it reached the Germans.
Once again, Nordic blood had dried up and been squandered; once again, a Nordic racial ideology had never taken hold.

The horsemen swept down from the north upon the southern peoples, and they were the penultimate wave of Nordic blood—tall, blond, and light-eyed.

The Cimbri, the Teutons, ever new tribes of the Nordic race, had dwindled and bled to death on heroic campaigns - finally, and already in the full light of history, the Germanic peoples now set out.
The youngest of Nordic blood, they were a magnificent people: as Tacitus has described them, they were a tall, blond, light-eyed people, radiant with the victorious strength of body and soul.
The Migration Period led them across the West toward bold battles and lavish deeds: wherever we follow their trail—whether to Spain, where the Goths settled, or to Italy, where the Lombards and Goths settled, and where the Normans later sailed—everywhere we see them, amidst the dissolution, in the void of the ruins of peoples and the decay of the South, founding capable states and erecting magnificent structures; one must read the excellent book that Albrecht Haupt has written, "Die älteste Baukunst der Germanen" (The Oldest Architecture of the Germanic Peoples).
The Anglo-Saxons crossed from the mainland to Britain, created a rich political life and magnificent literature on conquered soil, and later grew even further through the new influx of Nordic blood that poured into the country with the Danes and Normans - today, the Anglo-Saxons share power across the globe because they have embraced the concept of power, that hallmark of heroic statehood.
The Germans prepared to establish the imperial kingdoms of the Middle Ages, for a mighty will and drive had swept across the West ever since the heroic race had sent forth ever-new hordes from their ancestral homelands on the Baltic Sea: "with a thunderous roar", the earth was filled.
In the Normans of his "Bride of Messina," Schiller prophetically depicted the nature of the heroic race, as the Normans set sail in Viking ships to conquer Sicily:

"To them was given the mighty will
and the unbreakable strength:
armed with that terrible might,
they carry out what their hearts desire,
filling the earth with a thunderous roar."

Schiller had also already foreseen the doom of such state-foundings that fail to find their own racial and national identity:

"But behind the great heights
follows also the deep, tremendous fall."

Were they destined to fall; was the heroic blood bound to dry up in Greece, in Rome, in Spain, in Lombard Upper Italy, in Norman Lower Italy; did the tall, blond Indians of Nordic blood, from whom the rich development of Indian thought sprang, have to perish in the racial mixtures of India; did the Germanic Varangians in Russia have to perish in the blood mixtures of Eastern Europe?
It could not have happened otherwise, for one thing had been lost or remained unconscious from the very beginning: the source of heroic strength, the pure blood; the racial concept had been missing, and thus, in Southern Italy as elsewhere, despite all the conquests, only the defeated remnants of the Mediterranean peoples remained - Schiller recognized these facts and has the defeated race say:

"The foreign conquerors come and go: we obey, but we remain."

Thus, throughout history, the slave peoples, defeated ten times over, have remained, while the conquerors have vanished; the slave peoples have never made the heroic demand of wanting to live only as free men, bowing their heads and living in submission, and thus survived.
Thus, in our Western history, the Nordic blood has been lavishly squandered, having performed immortal feats of heroism, and yet has also been absorbed into the southern peoples and inferior races, because the racial idea was lacking—the racial idea that has preserved the Jewish people across countries, peoples, creeds, and languages throughout the centuries: “Every race must perish that allows its blood to be mixed.”

We are astonished by the outburst of heroic deeds reported by the history of the so-called Italian Renaissance: how were they possible from the mixture of peoples of the Mediterranean?
Today we have found the key to world history: the proud nobility of the Italian Renaissance states, the proud artists of the Italian Renaissance, are of Nordic blood, originating either from the lands of the Lombards or from those of the Normans.
Ludwig Woltmann has examined these racial relationships in his book “Die Germanen und die Renaissance in Italien" (The Germanic Peoples and the Renaissance in Italy): from the evidence regarding physique, skull structure, hair and eye color, and the character of the great men of the Renaissance, one can see that they were men of Nordic blood - thus, the Renaissance could be interpreted as a new, later incursion and victory of the Nordic race.
If one, for example, views the portraits from the Italian Renaissance at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin, one recognizes in these hard, long skulls and these light eyes time and again the people of the Nordic race, and encounters nowhere the facial features and physical build that we usually observe in Italians living today: of Nordic blood were—to name only the purest—Giotto, Masaccio, Filippo Lippi, Donatello, Signorelli, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Raphael, Titian, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Columbus, and Galileo.
The great men of later Italy—such as Alfieri, Foscolo, Leopardi, Manzoni, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Cavour and Garibaldi—also stem from Nordic blood.
Now we grasp once more the key to world history; now we no longer wonder how the great deeds of French history, for instance, were possible, for one need only read the French heroic poems of the Middle Ages where, time and again, the blond, blue-eyed barons are depicted, along with the beautiful women with white skin and golden hair.
As in Italy, so in France, and so too in Spain: the epitome of human beauty always equaled the epitome of Nordic physique.

We know, of course, that Frankish, Burgundian, and Norman blood were the finest forces within the body of France - from Nordic blood arose Corneille and Flaubert for the French, the two great Normans, and also of Nordic blood were Ronsard, Poussin, Voltaire, Houdon, Montesquieu, Mirabeau, Pascal, Diderot, Cuvier, Puvis de Chavannes, Musset, Lamartine, Berlioz, and Manet.
Now we are no longer surprised by the heroic spirit in the works of Corneille, the noble Norman; now we are no longer surprised by the un-French, not at all Walloon, heaviness of the great Flaubert, who was not at all metropolitan: he was Norman, blond, and blue-eyed, and Faguet, who wrote Flaubert’s biography, calls him a true Viking (“un vrai viking”).

What if Flaubert himself had known where he belonged; what if the vague feeling of "being German" ("au fond je suis allemand") had developed into a clear understanding of his Nordic nature; what if all men of Nordic blood—be they Russians or Italians, be they English, Germans, French, Spaniards, or Scandinavians—what if the people of the Nordic race had understood how to stand together, across all languages, classes, customs, and continents, just as the Jewish people have understood - what if the heroic race had succeeded in discovering its own racial concept, consolidated it, and preserved it with passion? It is futile to pursue this line of thought further, for a racial consciousness of the heroic race has not come to pass; the remarks here are intended only to demonstrate, through the strangeness with which they confront us, the truth of Disraeli's words that only he who understands the racial question has grasped the key to world history - but how alien to us all are the insights into the nature of the racial conditions of historical life!

Yet these remarks teach us something else as well: namely, that the original sin of humanity seems to be innate to the Nordic man like a diabolical inheritance—the sin of abandoning himself, of not respecting his own nature, and thus of losing himself.

The Nordic man is rich, the richest on earth: he has accomplished the great deeds of world history and of the spirit, yet he has acquired too little self-interest, and has thus given away more than a man ought to give away - he has given himself away out of carefree courage.

He has perished among foreign peoples, and where he has preserved himself in a people of the Nordic type, with his own people, there he has—with the exception of the Englishman, who has found a national idea—strolled through the ages like "Hans im Glück", giving up his own good things for an inferior foreign thing - that is the original sin of the Nordic man.

Only one Germanic people has been spared from this self-abandonment through its healthy self-interest: the Anglo-Saxons; for this reason—and understandably so—they have become the masters of the earth.

We need the science of the diversity of human races and, above all, the doctrine of the nature of the heroic race - in the West (Central and Western Europe), alongside less distinct influences of the Sudetic and Falisian races, we find the following, both pure and intermixed:

The Nordic race—tall, long-headed, narrow-faced with a pronounced chin, narrow nose with a high bridge, soft, light (golden-blond) hair, deep-set light (blue or gray) eyes, and rosy-white skin.

The Western race (Mediterranean race)—short in stature, long-headed, narrow-faced with a less pronounced chin, narrow nose with a high bridge, soft, brown or black hair, deep-set, dark eyes, and brownish skin.

The Dinaric race—tall, short-headed, narrow-faced, with a steep occiput, a strong nose that, with a high nasal bridge, protrudes far forward, slopes downward in the cartilaginous portion, and becomes quite fleshy toward the tip, softer brown or black hair, deep-set, brown eyes, and brownish skin.

The Eastern race (Alpine race)—short in stature, short-headed, broad-faced with an indistinct chin, short, blunt nose with a flat nasal bridge, coarse, brown hair, forward-set, brown eyes, and yellowish-brown skin.

The East Baltic race—short in stature, with a short head, broad face, an indistinct chin, a fairly broad, hooked nose with a flat nasal bridge, coarse, light (ash-blond) hair, light (gray, white-blue, or blue) eyes that appear slightly slanted and set forward, and light skin with a gray undertone.

Each of the races of Europe has its own spiritual character, and they can be mixed in various ways, even such that, for example, a Nordic nature and Nordic disposition can be found in a person of mixed blood, for a person's disposition is another racial characteristic.
The German people have blood from all the races of Europe in their national body - in its heyday, the German people were predominantly of Nordic character, but today, the darker racial components have gained a great deal over the old German character.
Today, in light of this, the German people stand in danger, for this is certain: the valuable race, the constructive, creative, formative, the fair, heroic race, is the Nordic one; history teaches this, and a glance at the features of the great men of the West reveals it.
We see this most clearly in France: it had a creative history and a creative spirit until it dealt the deathblow to its better racial component, the Nordic elements of its fine people, during the Revolution - here, in the Revolution, "the obedient and the stagnant"—as Schiller calls the inferior-race subjects of a people—this non-Nordic segment of the French population, rose up against the "foreign conquerors," the Frankish, Burgundian, and Norman nobility; this revolt was not only against the nobility either, for so surely did the old racial antagonism work here that it was enough to be blond to be dragged to the scaffold by the hands of the many of inferior race.
France, once so flourishing, is today witnessing the slow ebb of its civilization—the blood of the heroic race is lacking! It is poignant to see how discerning Frenchmen, Nordic men, sense the end: Nordic blood has almost dried up.
One more we look at the racial conditions of history: every upheaval that originates from the masses must be an upheaval by the inferior racial segments of the people against the superior ones, for the heroic race has never been inclined toward the mass mentality: as we know, heroes are loners and individuals, and think for themselves alone.
Now consider the people whom the German revolution of 1918 flooded into our government, and compare these people with the men who had built our Reich—what a dreadful decline in racial and human worth; what figures, what faces, what gestures has this revolution brought to light! It would be an instructive picture book that depicted the creative men who conceived and created the eternal German Reich alongside the people who worked to dismantle the idea of the Reich and bring about its decline; the racial question would become clear to even the least discerning.

Now, at last, the beginning must dawn upon us, into which we can step forward: the conscious and passionate embrace of the Nordic heritage, the ancient truth, and the commitment to and will for the heroic race.
The deeper research penetrates into the history of the Indo-European peoples, the more it recognizes the talent and beauty of the Nordic race; even the oldest grave finds, the oldest pieces of jewelry and tools, bear witness to the overwhelming spiritual power of the Nordic race - the Nordic animal ornament, from whose spirit the entire development of the Gothic style springs, testifies to a powerful creative will and rich creative power; the musical instruments that have been found testify that the Nordic people within Germanic culture had matured into a musical art before which the musical art of other ancient peoples

must pale, and thus, even in the earliest beginnings, in prehistory, the powerful development of Germanic musical art is already foreshadowed.

The Nordic race is not only the most gifted, but also the most beautiful of all peoples - there stands the slender figure of the man, upright, a triumphant expression of bone and muscle structure, of the magnificent proportions of broad, powerful shoulders, a wide chest, and narrow, firm hips; there blossoms the woman's form with narrow, rounded shoulders and broad, curved hips, yet always in slenderness of the most graceful charm.
In the man, the more sharply defined face; in the woman, the delicate face - in both, the radiant, well-circulated skin, the blond hair, the bright, triumphant eyes; in both, the perfect movement of a perfect body: a royal race among men! Thus have the Nordic people appeared as the adornment of the earth, as the radiant offspring of the joy of creation.
It does not surprise us that the artists of the West, in sculpture and poetry, have never depicted the beautiful human being in any other way than from the stature of the Nordic race - whether they were Italian, French, or German poets and painters, all of them sought the epitome of the beautifully formed human being only in the features of the Nordic race: can one imagine that Dante, who sings of his own blond hair, would have envisioned Beatrice in the physical form of the dark races; can one imagine a Leonardo or a Dürer seeing his Christ as a broad-faced, round-headed figure with dark eyes?
The Nordic human is the measure of beauty - whether Italian or French painters, they conceive of the beautiful human as one of the Nordic type.
Why could many French artists—most clearly, for example, the Burgundian Puvis de Chavannes—do nothing other than create their depictions of women based on the physical form of the Nordic race? They must have sensed that a non-Nordic type of woman, as a physical expression, would not have sufficed to convey what they sought to express through the abundance of their spiritual vision.
As if one could sense a secret, a longing of the Nordic Leonardo da Vinci, so one can also follow his sketches, which time and again depict the pure-blooded woman of the Nordic race, and who, time and again anew, from a vision of his soul, seeks, as it were, the Platonic ideal of the Nordic woman—restless, with a deeply hidden longing, and from a nobility that only Nordic blood bestows, and from which the sublime himself is made.
The Nordic human being is the unconscious longing of all who gaze, who wish to find a nobility of humanity in reality, who conceal a passionate love, who bleed to death for love, toward a race of people who live a heroic day, in abundance and power, in knowledge and deeds, alive in civility, alive to beauty, alive in wisdom and courageous in action.
To desire, to create, and to call forth such a race—that is the aspiration, that is the task set before us for our own nobility.

The Task

Here, then, lies the state's duty: we are familiar with Goethe's observation that before the Revolution, everything was an aspiration, but after it, everything became a demand - this will be repeated with every upheaval that originates from the masses.
The duty of the state, insofar as it wishes to become a heroic state, is now to awaken a new aspiration: the aspiration toward an exemplary German character, in accordance with the nature of the Nordic race; how a Nordic, exemplary German character is to prevail in home and state, in the life of the individual and in the nation as a whole, and what specific changes are necessary for this—these matters cannot be elaborated upon here.

The first part of this book has outlined the goals of the mindset, while in the second part, the moral foundations of a heroic state have been sketched out—once the will for heroic nature has been awakened, creative men will rise up in all fields.
The Nordic character must assert itself as early as in the elementary school reader and continue throughout the entire system of education and upbringing, until the course catalogs of our universities show that the study of the Nordic man—his nature, art, and his thinking, feeling, and striving—has become the foremost subject of research and instruction; additionally, the Civil Code and the Penal Code must express a German law rooted in the Nordic spirit.
In a word: there must be no sphere of physical or spiritual life where the overcoming of this 19th century—and even more so the joyful striving toward a heroic spirit—is not evident.
Once the spirit of Nordic blood stirs powerfully again and rises above the clamor of the age to speak clearly, then men will arise who will tell us how, in the heroic spirit of the Nordic race, we must make our bodies strong and our senses fresh: how we should tell and teach the masses; how to act and educate, to sing and speak, to build, to research, and to administer justice from a heroic mindset.

Once the spirit of Nordic blood stirs powerfully once more, the German women among us will live, from whom a heroic lineage must arise - from the timeless embodiment of German womanhood, the free mutual respect between man and woman, characteristic of the Nordic-Germanic way, will be reestablished in the domestic life of our homes and in the shaping of our public customs, bringing vitality to our existence.
The German woman is entrusted with tasks unlike any other: she is the guardian of the blood from which physical rebirth is to proceed, and from her is demanded the purity of experience befitting the mothers of heroic men; she must live for the purity of the race and the heroism of future generations.
In the structured framework of every individual endeavor, one gives meaning and value to the other, until manhood and womanhood, until law and public life, custom and faith, school and university, state and community, art and science—each and every one—is an expression of a single culture, the culture that gives every individual member of the nation, through the pursuit of the Nordic way, value and dignity, as well as confidence and joyful work - thus must we build the Reich that must remain ours, the Reich that is to be the expression of a binding German national idea.

We have recognized the growth potential of a racial concept in the example of the Jews, and the growth potential of a national concept in the example of the English: like a distant goal, like an uncertain future,

of which one should not yet speak at all—or at most only among like-minded people—the shaping of a Nordic racial concept presents itself almost as a view of things refuted by all facts.
Will there come to be a Nordic racial concept, a blood community, a blood covenant, of the Nordic people of all nations and classes? That is a question that today echoes into the void; moreover, it lies in the nature of the Nordic-Germanic people that they come together in tribes, special confederations, and individual nations; there will always be distinct peoples and tribes of the Germanic language, and we Germans, above all, with our questionable inclination toward "ideas of humanity," would do well to think first of our neighbors, of our ancestral homeland and our tribal kind, and above all to undertake a task that must become the joyful work of many generations: the establishment and consolidation of a German national idea.
Defined by the Nordic nature, it gives every smallest tribe a deepened consciousness—a consciousness of being invincible in pure blood, of being, in heroic pride and refinement, too powerful and combative to be mere guardians of the Reich—thus, the national and racial concepts of the German converge in the ideal image of the Nordic man.

Even the most disgraceful figure in German life, even the petty bourgeois, must not make us lose heart in the face of this goal; he must be shaken until he summons the courage to become a citizen, however agonizing it may be to shake him, and however pitifully he may resist: the harsh hand of the future statesman of the heroic type must do its work even on the petty bourgeois.
The philistine is the pitiful person who bluntly declares that not everyone can be a hero, and then goes back to thinking about making money and about comfort; the philistine is the pitiful person who tells every enthusiast, every accuser, every person driven by the spirit, with broad clarity, that their cause is exaggerated and far-fetched; the philistine gets along well with everyone who, like him, grumbles and complains to their heart's content while declaring how shabby things are everywhere, but he immediately loses his comfort and becomes insolent when one points out to him that every single German must act differently of his own accord if things are to improve.
The 19th century has produced the enlightened petty bourgeois - formerly, the petty bourgeois was intolerant, narrow-minded, dismissive, and self-righteous; now he is tolerant, weak-minded, conciliatory, mercenary, and howls with the wolves: he is the born liberal.
He has truly turned Christianity into his slave morality - to him, Christianity means something that allows him to make money through shady little deals, that allows him to associate with all sorts of accomplices and henchmen, for he does not judge, lest he be judged; he believes in a God who sees through all five fingers, in some old sleepyhead of a forgiving God, with whom he will one day find a warm place to stay, even if he has not been "a saint" - after all, he claims, not every person can be a saint or a hero.
It is difficult to refrain from using a tasteless tone when observing the philistine, for the philistine's provocative tastelessness almost demands it: one would have to speak here of the philistine's beer mug, which he will not let go of even if the whole state trembles; one would have to speak of his homely comfort, which presents the most pitiful picture of human existence…
But enough of that: one knows the philistine, and among those who believe they know him, there are still many who are themselves the closest of philistines.

The petty bourgeois is to become a citizen, and for every radical in Germany, this is the first impossibility: but we must set to work nonetheless! Here, too, only a faith that believes it because it is so foolish will suffice, for the petty bourgeois is persistent—one might compare him to a rubber bulwark.

He lives by his steadfast certainty that not everyone can be a hero; that is the proposition he constantly and entirely claims for himself. It is precisely the petty bourgeois, in his enlightenment, who will be most ready to declare at length that the German people are a mixed people and that the striving for the Nordic race is madness, an exaggerated madness - and yet the petty bourgeois must be shaken.
He must learn that a people's racial mixing must not stifle the striving for a superior race; he must learn that a heroic spirit in a less-than-ideal physical form is itself a racial sign of heroic blood, that heroic striving remains the first hallmark of the hero.
How many Germans are of pure Nordic blood? That is a difficult question to answer, for we Germans have become a mixed people - does that mean we must completely renounce the good blood within us? Truly, the less-than-Nordic man who strives for heroism stands more heroically than the Nordic man who lives indifferent days; the will toward the heroic race is in our age almost a heroic deed in itself, and it is at the very least such a steadfast resistance against all the darker blood heritage circulating within the German national body that a man's destiny can mature from this resistance alone.
Thus must the citizen be stirred: he must at least desire that his offspring share in the good blood heritage, and the will to have the right mindset must be awakened in him - herein lies the noblest task of a capable state.

We must not forget that the petty bourgeoisie is still often fertile ground for the race, that men can indeed emerge from dull-witted citizens of Nordic blood once their mindset is awakened - there are modern novels and comedies that profit from making a mockery of the bourgeois, but if one listens more closely, one realizes that in such works the petty bourgeois is used to mock the true German essence, and always through the corrosive wit that the big cities shamelessly breed.
It should not be forgotten that, even in the bourgeoisie and in a dull environment, men do grow up who do not become narrow-minded bourgeois - the task is to save such men through education and to awaken in them the new aspiration, the will toward the Nordic race and way of life: let us not despair of this work, despite everything!
Only from a unified individual striving, a joyful will of all members of the people, will a culture arise for us; only a national idea establishes for us the stronghold of a respected people; only a racial idea makes a people eternal - let the heroic spirit of our Nordic blood be for us both a racial and a national ideal, and let this heroic spirit give us the firm certainty that, as a unified culture and in our joyful striving together, we are invincible.

We have seen how the cultures of all ages have always been built upon a firm certainty, upon a faith - this is precisely what is unique about our situation, that we have recognized the value of pure blood and, above all, that we know what great deeds we owe to the Nordic race, and that we must therefore acquire its essential heritage in order to possess it.
It has been objected that the idea of race is an absurdity in our age of manifold racial mixing, and that to speak of racial purity in the West is to speak of the purity of an old harlot who has given herself to all - this is correctly judged from the standpoint of the uncreative man, from the standpoint of one who always says only how things are, and never how they ought to be.
But here lies the novelty of our age, and this is why we can step boldly and dispassionately into the beginning: to us—to use Kantian terminology—race is not given, but assigned; if there is a guiding principle for the German future, it is this.

Given as a gift of fate, the heroic race existed at the time when Tacitus glorified it; this Nordic people lived throughout Germania, the heroically born, pure and like no other, as Tacitus wrote—the youngest, freshest host of peoples of Nordic blood, a pure-blooded people, rejoicing in its pure tribal life and Germanic freedom.
Back then in Iceland, Scandinavia, England, and Germany, race was a given; to us today, it has been abandoned: it was a given when the musical and visual arts of the West were born from the Nordic creative spirit, when chivalry and knighthood formed their essence and honor, when the Nibelungenlied was composed, when German mysticism, by virtue of its Nordic essence, began to transform the degenerate Christianity handed down to it; pure race was a given when, through mighty deeds and heroic exploits, the German Reich arose, and the spiritual edifice of the West was erected in every individual endeavor.
In all the creative eras of the West, pure race was a given, working unconsciously; it was not until the 19th century, with all its institutions and ideas, that the current of the past was completely abandoned, turning arrogantly toward all the latest doctrines regarding the nature and purpose of our existence - perhaps this had to happen so that we might become a new beginning, and we want to be a new beginning! We want to know nothing of any past traditions or of accumulated bondage, and prove ourselves to be free, for after all, that is what the 19th century has brought us, and we do not overlook it. Now this century has left us with the most difficult task: that we ruthlessly overcome the century itself within ourselves in order to become truly free; that our time may thus become a beginning, and the most powerful beginning in all of history—that is its incalculable value.

Thus we can step into new beginnings, trusting in what is most precious to us: the life-giving blood within us, from our Nordic heritage; thus a moral law emerges for the people, the state, and every individual, and we formulate it as follows: act in such a way that you may at all times conceive of the direction of your will as the fundamental direction of a Nordic-racial legislation.
The philosophy of an earlier time sought “general legislation” that was to serve as a principle of action for all people: for example, with Kant, the content of his categorical imperative was still determined by the concept of general legislation - today, however, we have become aware of the essential limits of earthly forms of existence; we have become aware of the bonds of national identity, the necessary walls that every distinct ethnic group must erect around itself to preserve its own essence.
The demand of our classical era that man become a personality, a self-aware human being, has gained even more comprehensive power for us: a national character is valuable to us only if it lives its existence with self-awareness; we know, therefore, that the most universal legislation that can be conceived at all for the shaping of reality is that which clearly and purely encompasses a national character.
If there is to be any clear will and clear shaping at all, the broadest scope for a distinct kind is that it establishes itself as an intrinsic value, such a self-governance - to us then it sounds like this: act in such a way that you may at all times conceive the direction of your will as the fundamental direction of a Nordic-racial legislation.

In this sense, the Nordic race and, with it, the heroic spirit have been entrusted to us today - under such a moral and political law, the impossible must succeed, and thus, the masses must become a people again, the petty bourgeois must become citizens, the uprooted must become deeply rooted, dissolution must give way to formation, and despair must give way to joy.

Conscious of our Nordic blood—that is, conscious of its riches and conscious of its dangers—we must dare to do it! Today we know what dangerous things circulate in Nordic blood, how the Nordic man can all too easily be swept away, giving himself away with all his abundance to a foreign people and a foreign spirit - we no longer wish to be the foolish man from “Hans im Glück”.
To be conscious of our blood means to be masterful over ourselves, so that we may finally establish the Reich that must remain ours; to be conscious of our blood means to lead an attentive life, so that all we create may become genuine and enduring - just as Kleist interpreted the Liberator for us in “Hermannschlecht” so shall we become: politically astute, because we have learned that all the goodness of the Nordic man is abused by the inferior and the foreign, and sharp-eyed, rather taciturn, because we know how dangerous the childlike openness of the Nordic man can be.
Beyond that, like Hermann the Liberator, we want to become men who can harbor within themselves a strong hatred that steels the soul - but like Hermann the Liberator, above all glorious hatred, we want to also preserve the pure love—the childlike, abundant love—of the Nordic people, always conscious of the fact that the Nordic race is the nobility among mankind.
If such a radiance and new beginning were to come upon us that we might become a heroic people, that would be the new earth of which the Edda speaks, the dawn after the twilight of the gods and the night and nothingness of this century - then the prophecy would have foretold well:

“I see the earth rising once more
from the flood in fresh greenery;
the eagle soars above foaming falls,
he catches fish on soapy rocks.”

The cool morning air of the dawn would blow around us on the morning of this new heroism, and then the Reich would be founded.

Afterword to the Third Edition

When I was asked to prepare this book for its third edition, more than eight years had passed since I first wrote it down - I immediately realized then that I was looking at a work of my youth—all the more so because the war years had prevented me from putting many of the book's ideas into writing, even though, on the other hand, those very years had brought many new ideas to the book.
From this I had to acknowledge that a revision in the sense that I should have expanded or restructured the book's arguments based on newly gained insights was impossible; rather, I experienced for myself that saying of Heraclitus of Ephesus:

"We do not step into the same river twice."

What had previously seemed particularly important to me might now have lost some of its importance here and there: other things might seem to me to have been emphasized too little, while here, some things had been asserted too confidently; there, others had been decided too hastily, and elsewhere, some matters had been discussed too timidly.
My judgments regarding this or that aspect of folk life, art, the state, etc., had shifted to a greater or lesser extent; they were now grounded in different lines of thought or were now more clearly justified.

Thus I came to the decision to revise the book primarily in terms of style alone; even here, however, I proceeded as gently as possible: I have shortened passages where I found unnecessary repetitions or overly broad discussions, deleted sections where the presentation seemed to me too youthfully verbose, and occasionally inserted a clarifying word or substituted a more apt term for another - on the whole, however, I have sought to preserve the original version even where it now seemed to me overly youthful and exuberant, for every age should retain the right to its own style of writing.
I have received enough testimonials from both younger and older readers to whom the book has meant something precisely because of its language - these, too, have made me hesitate to undertake any substantial reworking.

- Lidingö (Sweden), March 1928.
Hans F. K. Günther